



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

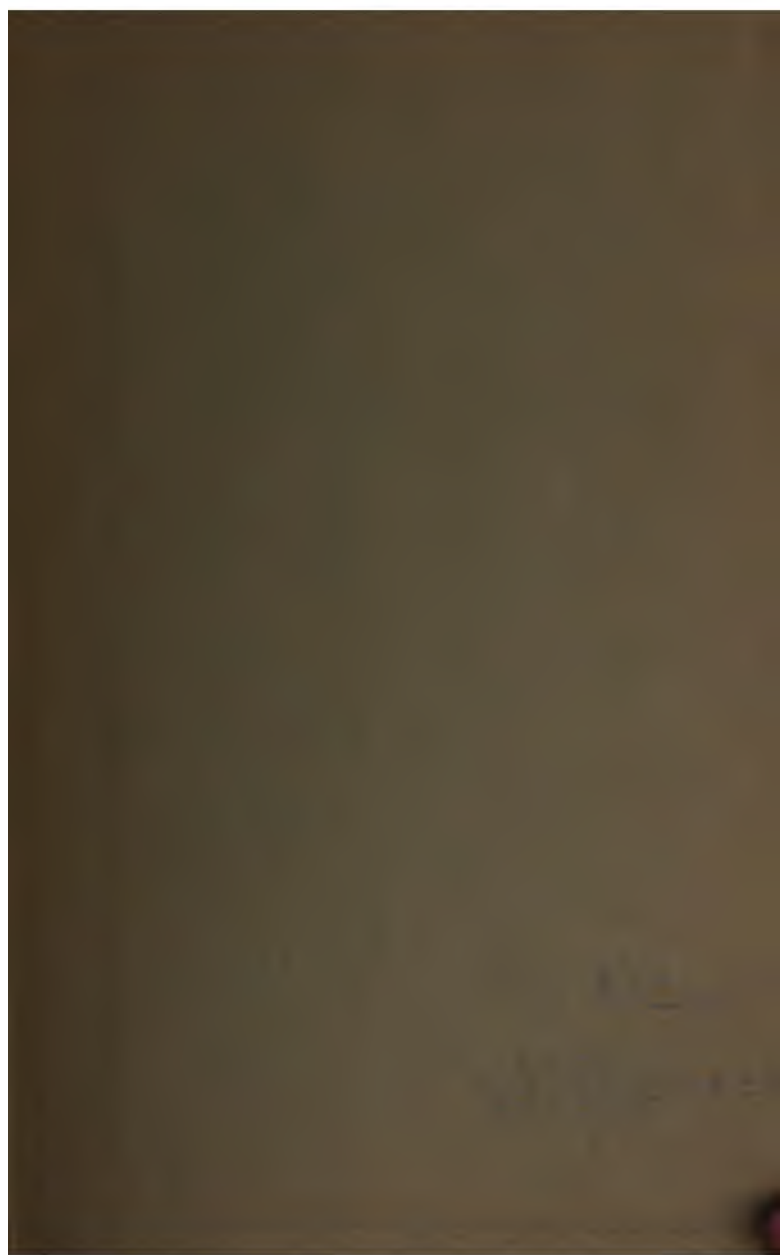
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>

NYPL RESEARCH LIBRARIES



3 3433 07489588 3











# A HUMAN DOCUMENT

*Alain*  
BY  
W. H. MALLOCK

AUTHOR OF "IS LIFE WORTH LIVING," "A ROMANCE OF THE NINETEENTH  
CENTURY," ETC.

*NEW EDITION*

UNIVERSITY  
OF  
TORONTO  
LIBRARY

NEW YORK

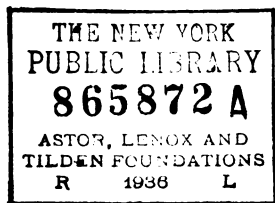
THE MERSON COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

*-h.c*

*copy 12-12-12  
E11*





COPYRIGHT, 1892, BY  
**CASSELL PUBLISHING COMPANY.**

*All rights reserved.*

NEW YORK  
PUBLIC LIBRARY  
ASTOR, LENOX AND  
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

## INTRODUCTION.

---

THE following work, though it has the form of a novel, yet for certain singular reasons hardly deserves the name. It is based from end to end on authentic records of fact; and it is virtually a personal memoir of the most daring and unreserved kind—so unreserved, indeed, that I am justified in making the disclosure only because death, distance, and circumstance, as well as literary disguise, have placed the characters dealt with beyond all reach of recognition. That this is the case will be made quite plain to the reader by a short account of how I obtained my materials, what those materials were, and the manner in which they have been treated.

I happened to be staying at a country house on the Continent a year or so after the publication of a now celebrated book. That book was the "Journal of Marie Bashkirtseff"; and as several of the party then present were reading it, it was not unnatural that it should be continually discussed and alluded to. There was one lady, however—a Countess Z——, a Hungarian, whose interest in it struck me as being keener than on ordinary grounds could be accounted for; while sitting with her on a pleasant afternoon in a pavilion by the side of a lake, and talking idly of any triviality that suggested

itself, she recurred to the subject so abruptly and with such an air of abstraction, that I felt convinced it was constantly occupying her mind. Her remark was not very striking, and it required no particular answer, so by way of showing her that I was civil enough to be attending, I gave expression to a thought which had often before occurred to me.

"What a pity," I said, "that a woman like Marie Bashkirtseff, with such resolute frankness, and such power of self-observation, should have died before her experiences were better worth observing. She often tells us herself that she has nothing in her life to hide. A woman who can say that has not much to reveal. It does not mean merely that she has not lived badly—it means also that she has not lived at all."

My companion fixed her eyes on me with an odd look of inquiry.

"Do you remember this?" I went on. "There is one thing and one thing only which Marie Bashkirtseff seems to wince at recording; and that thing, she exclaims passionately, sullied her whole life. Do you remember what it was? It was a single kiss on the forehead which she gave to an uninteresting boy. A woman who can think herself sullied by a childish trifle like that knows no more of life than a man can know of partridge shooting who feels disgraced as a sportsman by a splash of mud on his shoe."

"Tell me," said the countess with a slight access of irony, "how deep in the mud must a woman walk before a man considers her progress interesting?"

"He doesn't want her," I said, "to walk in the mud at all. When you ask that question you are running

away with a word. What he wants her to experience is not the dirt of life, but the depths. The woman we are speaking of had only paddled in the shallows, and she thought herself drowning when a ripple broke over her ankles. I confess I am irritated by this super-sensitive delicacy; and yet, after all, it is that very quality which, if she had ever really lived, would have made her Journal such a revelation. I wish," I went on, as my thoughts more or less ran away with me, "I wish that this woman, with all her moral daintiness, had been swept off her feet by some real and serious passion. I wish that with soul and body she had gone through the storm and fire; that what she had once despised and dreaded, had become the desire of her heart; and that she had found herself rejecting, like pieces of idle pedantry, the principles on which once she prided herself as being part of her nature. What an astonishment and what an instruction she would have been to herself during the process! Think how she would have felt each part of it—the degradation, the exaltation, the new weakness, the new strength, the bewilderment, the transfiguration! Could she only have known all this, and have written it down honestly, she then would have given us a human document indeed."

Countess Z—— remained silent for a moment or two. At last she said, "I am thinking over a practical matter. I possess a certain something, and I am thinking whether I will show it to you. Tell me," she went on with a laugh, "do you think you would care to see it?"

To this riddle only one answer was possible. "Anything which you think worth showing me I am sure I shall think worth seeing."

"Ah," she replied, "but you will have to do more than see it. This is something which you will have to pore and puzzle over, and if you don't take enough trouble about it to thoroughly try your temper, I shall discover how apathetic you have been, and consider you have abused my confidence. You are perhaps prepared to hear that what I speak about is a collection of manuscripts."

"Are they yours?" I asked.

"Only," she said, "in the sense that they are my property. They were left me by the writer, who died a few months ago. She was a beautiful woman, and you know something about her; but not much, or I can't tell what would have happened to you."

"Go on," I said; "this is indeed interesting."

"If you really meant," she replied, "what you were just now saying, it ought to be far more interesting to you, ~~than~~ you have the least reason to suppose. Shall I tell you what the manuscript is? It is an imaginary continuation of Marie Bashkirtseff's Journal, in which she is represented as undergoing the exact fate you were wishing for her. I suspect, too," she continued, "that it is something more than that. Indeed, I am certain that it is; but you must read it first, and I will talk it over with you afterward. If you care to have it, it shall be sent to your room to-night."

Countess Z—— was as good as her word. I was tempted for a moment to think she was even better, when, on going upstairs to bed, I saw lying on my table, not what I had pictured to myself—a small, unpretending packet, which I could have held in my hand, and put with my pocket-handkerchief under my pillow, but a

great folio volume bound like a photographic scrapbook, the sight of which filled me with dismay. When, however, I opened it, I was at once reassured and puzzled. It was a scrapbook in reality, not in appearance only; and its bulk was explained by the fact that its leaves were of thick cartridge paper, and that the manuscript, whose sheets varied in size and appearance, had been pasted on to these, with a liberal allowance of margin. I realized presently the reason of such an arrangement. The Imaginary Journal, as Countess Z—— had called it, was not entirely a journal, and was not entirely imaginary. I could see, it is true, that some single thread of narrative, in a feminine handwriting, ran through the whole volume; but this was broken by pages after pages of letters, by scraps of poetry, and various other documents, all in the handwriting of a man, and all—as it seemed—originals. “These,” I said to myself, “are fragments of actual life”; and a glance which I took at a few scattered passages was enough to convince me that such was indeed the case. There was no mistaking the matter; for one or two of the letters bore traces of postmarks, which had indented them through their envelopes. The only thing that seemed strange to me was that any man in his senses should have cared to intrust to the post certain of the passages I had glanced at. My curiosity was so completely roused that I turned to the narrative, which I concluded would explain the whole. I began at the beginning; it was striking eleven when I did so; and I did not close the volume till nearly four in the morning, by which time I had read it through to the end.

It was a singular record, not only on account of its

contents, but of the manner in which it seemed to have been composed. The greater part of the narrative was just what I had been led to expect—an imaginary Journal of Marie Bashkirtseff, during an imaginary continuation of her life. This was written in French; and there was an obvious effort, at first, at reproducing the tone and manner of the original. It was an effort, however, which was not very successful; and the authoress soon abandoned it, or rather forgot to make it. As she did so, she became more and more interesting; until gradually, instead of reading the literary exercise of an amateur, I seemed to be listening to the voice of a living woman who was confessing to me. The very defects of her style, which, though generally clear and straightforward, yet often broke down with a sort of pathetic helplessness, contributed to this illusion. I felt each time this happened, that a woman's eyes were looking at me, and that her lips, as she spoke, had a deprecating smile on them, or that they trembled. Had she written far better the effect would have been far less vivid. To a critic, no doubt, her triumph would not have seemed a very legitimate one; but I found as I read on, that it became even more complete. The deeper the emotions she had to express, the more crude and fragmentary was the form in which she attempted to express them; and the result was that her baffled and crippled sentences, her abrupt transitions, and odd lapses of grammar, though they could hardly be said to constitute a good description of what she professed to have felt, seemed to be more than that; they seemed to be a visible witness of its reality, as if her language had been broken by it, like a forest broken by a storm, or as if it were

some living tissue, wounded and quivering with sensation.

But there were further peculiarities about the narrative, besides those of style. Beginning as it did in the form of a journal, and maintaining for the most part this form throughout, it suddenly assumed at intervals that of an ordinary novel. The writer herself was spoken of in the third person; scenes were described at which she was not present; and the unspoken thoughts of a certain man were set forth by her as if he was avowedly a character of her own creation. When I first came upon a passage of this sort its effect naturally was to dispel the impression which had been growing on me, that the imaginary Journal was imaginary in name only. The whole thing at once seemed to be artificial, and instead of interesting fact, to be very childish fiction. Before long, however, I began to make discoveries, by which my original impression was not only restored, but strengthened. I have said that the woman's narrative was broken in many places by the insertion of various documents, evidently written by a man. The first of these was a letter which the imaginary Marie Bashkirtseff was made to say in her Journal she had received from a particular person. The sentiments expressed, and the events alluded to in it, all fitted completely the situation that had been described by her; but there was one discrepancy—every proper name was different. According to the Journal the letter came from St. Petersburg; in reality, it bore the address of a well-known club in Vienna. According to the Journal, the writer was a Russian; quite another story was betrayed by his clear signature; and all the subsequent documents by the same



hand, whether they were letters, or verses, or, as some of them were, mere nondescript fragments, bore to the woman's narrative a relation substantially similar. This, however, is not the whole of the matter. One of the fragments I have mentioned seemed, as I read it, to be familiar to me; and I asked myself where I could have come across anything like it before. In a moment I recollected. It was in that very volume; it was in one of those parts of the narrative which were written in the form of a novel. The passage I am referring to described the thoughts of a man as he sat dejected and solitary, looking at a woman's photograph; and I had been surprised at the insight it displayed into the mysteries of the male heart. I now saw that the whole was taken almost literally from a confession that had been made by the very man himself who was in question. Nor did this case stand alone. I continually came afterward on others of the same kind. Descriptions, conversations, verses, philosophical and literary reflections, and pieces of self-analysis—things like these which occurred in the writings of the man, had, I discovered, been incorporated into the writings of the woman, she having changed hardly anything but the names. This change she had carried out consistently.

It may well be imagined that, after only one reading of it, a volume compiled so strangely left me in considerable perplexity; and for half the night I lay considering what was the explanation of it. But the following morning I went through it more carefully; and when, later in the day, I again met Countess Z——, I had come, as I was able to tell her, to a definite conclusion about part of it. So far as it related to the man, the story revealed

in it was a true one; that man's life, for some reason or other, had had a special interest for the woman who wrote the Journal; by some means or other she had possessed herself of many of its secrets; and she had conceived the idea of at once describing and hiding it in what, with a reader, should pass for a work of fiction. Farther, she had wavered in her mind as to the form which this work should take—whether it should be that of a fictitious journal or of a novel; for it was evident now to me that the contents of the volume as they stood were merely a rough and experimental copy, interspersed with raw materials, of which as yet she had used part only.

“So much,” I said to Countess Z——, “must be plain to anyone. That, however, is only one-half of the question, and as to the other half, I am altogether in doubt. The man's story is true, but then there is the story of the woman. Is that true also? Or was it merely constructed by the authoress in order to suit the dramatic requirements of the other? I have sometimes inclined to the first view, sometimes to the second. There are certain scenes and feelings described by her in a way in which a woman could not have described them—I constantly said this—if they had not been part of her own actual life; and yet, on the other hand, I constantly said also, would any woman, if they had been, have had the courage to describe them? There is another supposition which once or twice occurred to me, and that is, that though her whole story is true, it is the story not of the authoress but of some other woman, who had revealed it to her. I thought, you see, that though she might have shrunk from describing herself, she might yet have

had nerve enough for a *post-mortem* examination of a sister."

"Your supposition is wrong," said Countess Z— quietly. "It is her own story. She has changed, as you have observed, the names of places and people; and also a number of other accidental circumstances; but so far as essentials are concerned, she has, to the best of my belief, not written a word that is not absolutely true. In that volume you have her life, and the life of another, turned literally inside out."

"And do you mean to tell me," I exclaimed, "that a woman of position and reputation, a woman too so sensitive as she must have been, and in some ways so extraordinarily innocent, really proposed to publish such a confession about herself, with such a mere pretense of a veil thrown over her own identity? There are things in that Journal which the most callous woman would hide."

"There is nothing in that Journal," said Countess Z—, "which a callous woman could feel; and it is the sensitive women, and not the callous ones, for whom confession is sometimes a necessity. The veil, however, which you think so transparent, would really have been thick enough for every practical purpose. This hidden drama of which you have just seen the record, was unsuspected by anyone during the lifetime of the two chief actors. It is not likely to be suspected, now that they both are dead. The very people who knew them while it was in progress, and indeed took unconscious parts in it, would never, from any account of it, be likely to connect it with them, unless persons and localities were mentioned by their actual names; so the changes made

by the authoress, slight as you may think them, would have been more than sufficient, supposing her book had been published, to have preserved her secret from even her own acquaintance. And now," Countess Z—— continued, "I will ask your opinion about this. I have several times wondered during the last few weeks whether someone might not be found who could take the volume in hand and do for my poor friend what she had herself intended to do with it—work up its contents into some presentable form, and publish it. Do you think that a book like that would be found generally interesting?"

"That would depend largely," I said, "on how it happened to be written. The whole of the materials would have to be recast; for as they stand they are not a story in any literary sense; though they enable us, or rather force us, to construct one out of them for ourselves. But supposing that the story in question were to be told in an adequate way—and by this I mean only one very simple thing; I mean in such a way as to impress the reader with the truth of it—no novel that I have read for years, would for me personally have half so much meaning or interest."

"I have thought," said Countess Z——, "of writing to our Hungarian novelist J——, and asking him to look at the manuscripts, and see if he could make anything out of them; but I have now got a new project, and you must tell me honestly what you think of it; for it is to make that proposal not to him, but to you. There are several reasons," she continued, "why, if you care to undertake it, you would be specially suited to the task. The characters, as you have seen, have a certain connec-

tion with England; and an Englishman would understand them far better than a Hungarian. There is one reason: here is another. You know Hungary, or at least certain parts of it; and it so happens that some of the places where you stayed are the very places in which some of the incidents of the story happened. But now I am coming to a better reason still. Do you remember that, when you were staying at Schloss S——, you made an expedition to Count D——'s villa, at N——, a house on the slope of a hill, just under a ruined castle?"

"How," I exclaimed, "could you possibly know that? For it was not—I am certain—one of the things I told you about."

"No," she said, "but Countess D—— is my sister. I often stay there; and a little white boudoir, into which I know you went, opening out of the hall, is my own room. You needn't stare at me as if you thought I was a witch. My sister and I arrived there the day after your visit. I heard of you from the housekeeper; and in particular I heard this. Of all the pictures—and there are many of them supposed to be interesting—you would look at none but three miniatures in my boudoir—three miniatures in a case, all of the same woman. You couldn't be got away from them."

"This is perfectly true," I said, "I see them distinctly still. The woman had a dress of a different color in each. There was a brown dress, a purple dress and a red one with white spots on it. And what did her face mean? Was it guilt, or innocence, or passion, or aspiration? It was a sort of chameleon, and it meant them all by turns. That, at least, is what I thought

---

afterward. I only felt at the time as if there were some philter in the ivory."

"That," said Countess Z——, "is the woman who wrote the Journal. It is her life and soul that I am now preparing to commit to you. Ah," she exclaimed, "I have touched you, I see, at last! Do you consent? Will you refuse what I ask you? Come," she went on, "bring down the book into the library. We shall not be disturbed there, and we will look it over together."

I brought it. She turned to something which I had not before noticed—a pocket inside one of the covers, and she extracted from it a piece of thin note paper. "Look at this," she said. "You have probably not seen it. It is the dedication which the authoress meant to have prefixed to her book; and it will show you how completely you will be fulfilling her wishes if you will only write and publish that book as her proxy."

What she held out to me was merely a few lines. I recognized the hand with which the perusal had made me familiar; but, to my surprise, what I now saw was written not in French but in English, and not in the English of a foreigner. The Countess had called it a "Dedication"; the writer herself had given it a different title, which was "Consecration." Then came some words, well known to an English reader, but seeming strange when appropriated here: "To the sole and only begetter of this volume." And then came what follows: "You by whose side I shall lie, in a wicker coffin like yours, with whose bones my bones shall mingle, and whose flesh I shall meet again in the sap of the violets above our grave, I have done my best, while waiting to come back to you in death, to perpetuate in this book

neither your life nor mine, but that one single life into which both our lives were fused. Were my power as a writer equal to my love as a woman, that life should live in these pages, as it lived and breathed once in our now lonely bodies. I would make it live—all of it; I would keep back nothing; for perfect love casts out shame. But if anyone should think that I ought to blush for what I have written, I should be proud if, in witness of my love for you, every page of it were as crimson as a rose."

When I had finished reading this I found my companion looking at me with an expression of triumph at the interest which was no doubt visible in my face. "I told you," she said, "that you knew something of my author-ess; and wasn't I right in adding that if you had known more, I should have been afraid to predict the consequences? Come," she went on, "have I not won my cause? You cannot refuse me now; your heart is in the work already."

"It is," I said. "I confess it. But still I foresee difficulties—some of them specially incident to writing such a book in English. Give me to-day to think the matter over; and to-morrow I will tell you what I can really do."

The difficulties which had first struck me, and which first engaged my attention, were those which, in spite of what Countess Z—— had said, I thought might be experienced in concealing the identity of the characters; and the following day I pointed many cases out to her, where more disguise would be necessary than a mere change of name. On second thoughts she was disposed to admit this; but, on the other hand, she now went on

to explain to me a variety of things which the manuscript only imperfectly indicated, such as the position and circumstances of each of the characters mentioned in it, and the precise extent to which the salient facts of the story escaped the notice of the society in the midst of which they occurred. And the result was to convince me that she had been substantially right from the first, and that the book she was anxious I should attempt might, without any imprudence, be so written as to be minutely and literally true, not only in all essentials, but in point even of local color—indeed that many of the facts would be disguised most completely, if they were taken from the manuscript without any change at all.

That book accordingly is now offered to the reader. As to what the changes are which I have been obliged to make, I cannot say more, or the object of those changes would be defeated. For the method of narration and for the style, indeed, I am myself of course responsible; but whatever may be thought of this part of the book, and whatever else I may or may not have contributed to it, I can say of it at least one thing with confidence, even if it is not a piece of literature, it is a piece of life; it is genuinely a human document.

And this brings me to a very important point. It is precisely because the book is true in this wide sense that there are certain difficulties, as I said to Countess Z——, specially incident to its being produced in English. In the English fiction of to-day, it is a universal rule that the men, and especially the women, with whom the reader is invited to sympathize, shall always stop short in their relations to one another at a certain point, whatever may be their dispositions and circumstances. It is



also a rule equally universal, that any grave transgression of the conventional moral code shall entail on its transgressors some appropriate punishment, or at all events that it shall not end in their happiness. In the present book neither of these rules is observed. The characters violate the first; their history violates the second; and the reason is that this book is true to life, while to a great part of life the rules are absolutely untrue. The fact remains, however, that in this country these rules supply to a numerous class of readers a sort of moral standard by which all fiction is judged; and the book is consequently one to which many people may raise objections. I think it best to admit this fact plainly; and to state, in a brief and general way, how I should answer such objections myself, supposing them to be really raised. I should not consider it a sufficient answer to say that every detail mentioned in it was taken from actual life; for it is quite possible so to select such details, as to misrepresent the life of which they formed a part, and to convey a false idea of human nature generally. This, in my judgment, is precisely what is done by M. Zola. His fault is not that he exhibits the operation of certain passions, which our English novelists forbear altogether to deal with. It is that he represents those passions as covering a larger field than they do; and that the other elements of life, which are of at least equal importance, are dwarfed by this treatment into a grotesquely false insignificance. This is not the fault, however, of such writers as M. Zola only. It is the fault of writers such as Miss Yonge also, and if we try both by the same severe standard, "The Daisy Chain" must be condemned for the same reason as "Nana."

Neither are true to life for each excludes one-half of it. No doubt "The Daisy Chain" has this point in its favor—that it is, as it was meant to be, a good book for children, whereas a book like "Nana" is a good book for nobody. But what is good for children is useless for men and women, who differ from children mainly in their inevitable experience of so much that we shelter childhood from even hearing of prematurely. To men and women, who are capable of observation and reflection and who are neither depraved nor abnormally innocent, life is essentially a combination of widely different elements. Whatever may be our definition of good or evil, and however remote as an abstraction the one may be from the other, we see that as realities they are everywhere in the closest contact, sometimes fretting each other, sometimes apparently united not only in the same society, but in the same people and in the same motives and actions; and the interest of life depends upon neither separately, but on the constant and ever changing relations between the two; the evil losing its meaning when considered apart from the good, and the good losing its meaning when considered apart from the evil. Hence it follows—and surely nobody can dispute the fact—that any picture of the one must be misleading and incomplete, unless it is part of a picture equally complete of the other. Now my case on behalf of the present book is this—that it presents us with a picture equally complete of both; and that its various details are not only true individually, but form collectively a true representation of life.

It may, however, still be urged by some that I have not so much as touched upon the important question

yet. The important question, they may say, is not whether the book is true, but whether it is moral. My answer would be this—that if it is true in the sense I have just described, it is as moral or as immoral as life is, neither more nor less. If it is immoral to show, as actual life shows, that the hard and fast division between good and evil, which undoubtedly exists in the region of abstract theory, and which for certain purposes it is undoubtedly necessary that we should recognize, does not exist in the lives of average men and women; and farther, what is still more important, that good and evil fortune do not follow, in any invariable way, on what moralists classify as good and evil conduct, but are constantly apportioned, without any apparent reference to the conventional requirements of retributive moral justice; if it is immoral to show all this, then it must be admitted that this book is immoral. But in that case we must make another admission also—that life is immoral in precisely the same sense; that while moralists teach one thing, it teaches another, and that no picture of it is fit for good people to look at, in which half of its distinctive features have not been suppressed or altered.

If anyone takes this view of the case, I cannot, here at least, attempt to argue him out of it. I must content myself with saying that the view is not mine, but that I hold to the opposite and, indeed, the only other alternative. I believe that morality is only worth inculcating, because, and in so far as, its motives, rules, and sanctions correspond to the realities of life considered in its entirety. I believe, therefore, that any picture of life, if only complete so far as its subject goes, will be sure to convey some moral or other, though what that moral is

may vary with the minds that look for it. It will in any case be sounder than any that could be conveyed by illustrations manipulated for the special purpose of conveying it; and a complete autobiography of the conscience of a single profligate, were such a thing possible, would teach us more than a dozen descriptions of the selected pieties of saints. How far such teachings would, in their practical tendency, correspond with those which are conventionally called moral in this country is doubtful. Sometimes the correspondence between the two would be complete and striking; but sometimes the former would certainly contradict the latter, if not in their most important, at all events in their tenderest, points. This must be admitted as a general truth; but readers of the present book, which is all that we are here concerned with, if affronted by finding in it anything not moral in the conventional sense, will at all events be comforted by finding under the surface much that would coincide with the morals of the most conventional sermon. If they are scandalized by being shown that people who have many undoubted virtues can yet deliberately commit certain offenses, they may learn a sharp and salutary lesson in charity by being shown that people whom they would curtly classify as offenders may yet have virtues which perhaps in themselves are wanting. If they see consciences easy which they think ought to be troubled, they will see consciences troubled which superficially seem easy. They will see, in short, what ought to edify them more than anything, even if it does not happen to do so, that the sense of virtue and the practice of right conduct are far from being the monopoly of those who are technically virtuous. Finally, if the

book is complained of because people who are not technically virtuous are shown in it to have been ultimately happy, as such people often are, I would point out that their happiness, such as it is, results from qualities in them which everyone must admire, and not from those of their actions, which perhaps most people will condemn.

# A HUMAN DOCUMENT.

---

## CHAPTER I.

IN the early spring of the year 18—certain public events happened to have attracted to Vienna a considerable number of the English who had been spending the winter on the Continent; and the British Ambassadors was fully justified in saying, as she said one evening to a cluster of old friends, that though that year she would be unable to go to London, for the last fortnight London had come to her.

This remark was made in her own drawing-room, where the guests were slowly assembling for a dinner-party that was to be exclusively English.

“My dear,” she went on regretfully, as she drew aside from the others a distinguished-looking woman, the complete whiteness of whose hair, due though it was to age, had the brilliant effect of powder, “I thought, of course, that you would have gone in with Julian; but the princess’s coming has disturbed all my arrangements, and I’m afraid I shall have to consign you to old Lord R—— instead. I am more sorry than I can say; but you’ll see that I’ve done my best for you. You will sit by his deaf ear, so you need not utter a word to him;

and on the other side of you you will have Robert Grenville."

"Mr. Grenville!" said the lady whose fate was thus announced to her, "I met him first when he was an attaché in Paris, when half the French ladies were in love with him, and he had just published some love-poems. Somehow or other one has not heard much of him lately. He ought, with his talents, to have made more noise in the world." Then, with her eyebrows slightly raised, and her lips for a moment smiling with a humorous self-contempt, "If that man," she said, "had been born a generation earlier, I fully believe I should have fallen in love with him myself."

"I've no doubt you would, my dear," said the Ambassador with a certain trenchancy, not malicious itself but hinting a sense on her part of saying something that might be said maliciously.

"You will, therefore, be happy to hear that he is now in a fair way to make as much noise in the world as even his best friend could desire. Let us ask Julian." And she turned round to her husband. "Just look at him. He is quite absorbed in your niece. It is always with him a case of the 'eternal feminine.' Julian," she said, "Lady Ashford is asking about Mr. Grenville. She would like to hear how a poet is going to rise to fame."

The Ambassador was indeed engrossed in what seemed his most frequent occupation—that of talking to the youngest and prettiest woman in the room. When thus appealed to he made no answer for a moment, but murmured to his companion, in his low indolent voice, "Did you ever know a poet? If you didn't, you must keep your eyes open, and you will see one to-night eating his

dinner opposite to you." Then, lifting himself from his seat and coming toward his wife, he put his hand on her arm with a charming air of devotion, and said to Lady Ashford; "So you are talking of Robert Grenville. Many people, most likely, will soon be doing the same. I had a letter yesterday from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and he told me that never, in all his former experience, had he met anyone with such a natural genius for finance."

"Finance!" echoed Lady Ashford. "What on earth are you talking about? What has finance to do with Mr. Grenville the poet?"

"Our poet," said the Ambassador, "is unfortunately a poet no longer, and the crown that is now held out to him was never woven by the Muses. What has happened to him has been this: I thought that of course you had heard of it. Just before the opening of last autumn's session, the Chancellor of the Exchequer lost one of his secretaries; and found himself suddenly overwhelmed in a certain country house with more work than he could manage without assistance. Grenville, who was staying there also, offered to do what he could for him. He did so, and with results that astonished the Chancellor and himself equally. He continued to act as secretary for the whole of the next six months; and now, when Sir Jacob Jackson goes home in July, Robert Grenville will take his post at Constantinople. If he can deal with the difficulties which are accumulating and awaiting him there, he may easily find himself at once one of the foremost figures in Europe."

"Well," said Lady Ashford plaintively, "it's an odd metamorphosis. One could never have thought that—



what shall I call him? well, a drawing-room love-poet, was the sort of stuff out of which fate could make a financier."

"There are," said the Ambassador, "two sorts of love-poet—the one with whom poetry is a substitute for life; and the other with whom it is a mere expression of part of it. The one is a dreamer whose ambition is passionate writing; the other is a man of action whose ambition is passionate living; and if he writes about love it is simply for this reason, that love at the time is the principal part of life for him. That was Grenville's case; and you can see it in all his verses. You can see in every line what the man who wrote them was thinking about. He was not thinking about verses; he was thinking about a woman. That was their great charm. They were interesting because they showed the women who read them that the writer would have been an interesting lover. Now, dear Lady Ashford," he went on, "of course you are aware of this—that of all important businesses, love-making in the world is the one which requires most knowledge of the world; so I don't think we need wonder if a man who excelled in that should be able to turn his talent to other practical uses."

"Julian," said the Ambassadress, "when you have done your discourse on poetry, I want to inform you that here is Princess Plekonitz."

"My dear friend," exclaimed the Ambassador turning round, and looking as if he would take in his arms the figure that stood before him, "what ages since we met! The sight of you makes me young again."

The Princess was a short sharp-eyed woman of seventy, with a face which was bright with a kind of caustic

benevolence, and on which age had rewritten the smiles of her prime in wrinkles. She was English, an heiress—the widow of a Hungarian magnate; and as soon as her host was tired of retaining both her hands, she began to look round the room as if searching for old acquaintances. She failed, however, to discover any, even with the aid of her gleaming eyeglasses, till the last guest having arrived, the movement was made for dinner. Then suddenly, as she was taking her host's arm, "Who's that?" she asked. "Isn't it Mr. Grenville—Robert Grenville—Bobby, I used to call him? Yes, it's you," she called out, as a man at a little distance, who was just claiming his companion, turned round with a smile. "It's me too. Go on; and come and talk to me afterward."

Robert Grenville experienced one immediate consequence of having attention thus pointedly drawn to him. Several rapid glances were cast in his direction, and he felt rather than saw that he was an object of general interest. However small may be a man's share of vanity, there is in this feeling something which is certainly not displeasing to him. Robert Grenville was less vain than most men; his vanity was not flattered, but he was conscious that his spirits rose a little, and he sat down to dinner with a sense that he had more to say than he had when a moment ago he was starting to leave the drawing-room.

This was fortunate for the lady of whom he had been given the charge. She was the daughter of the governor of —, now on his way to England, and under some present shyness the airs and graces were visible which had claimed and repressed devotion in the halls of Gov-

ernment House. Grenville had a foreboding that conversation would not be possible with her, but he now felt nerved for all the demands of duty; and by the time she had freed her gloves from the embraces of a whole family of bangles, he had hit on a question which made his path clear for him. On the opposite side of the table was a man with a bulbous face, whom he remembered to have seen once perspiring with importance at the Foreign Office. He asked his neighbor—providentially in guarded language—if she knew who this gentleman was, hardly expecting that she could tell him; and she, with an arch smile and a little jerk of her head, said, “Don’t you know? That’s my *pater*—that’s Sir Septimus Wilkinson.” Then cheered by a sense of superior social knowledge, she continued, “Look there—that is Sir Theophilus Entwistle.” And she pointed out, by a nod, a shining star of the Colonial Office, partially eclipsed for the time being by a napkin, the corner of which he was tucking inside his collar. Her eyes now made a careful tour of the table and with increasing buoyancy she presently proclaimed to Grenville that she could, as she expressed it, “tell him about nearly everybody.” Hardly waiting for encouragement, she came out with the names of various distinguished and highly fashionable personages, assigning a face to each name as she did so. The names were correct, and the people named were present, but she was not successful in putting the two together; and Grenville was for a moment struck dumb with astonishment when a certain old dowager, the fattest woman in London, was pointed out to him as her daughter, the flower of last year’s season. He was, however, far too good-natured a man to confuse

his informant by any blunt and cruel correction; but, adroitly pretending not to have understood her meaning, he managed to set her right without showing that he had, discovered her to be wrong. All this made a good deal of conversation; but at last the subject was exhausted, and Grenville's wit was failing him, when a spotty little attaché, Miss Wilkinson's other neighbor, caught her bead-like eye and soon relieved him of her attention.

"Mr. Grenville, I am at last able to speak to you." The words were Lady Ashford's and they sounded like a musical bell. Grenville turned round; his entire bearing changed, and his face took the look of interest which he had been just trying to simulate. "That young person," Lady Ashford continued, "seems to me to have made you very vivacious. She was your lawful partner, but I'm sure you have done your duty by her, so you must now devote yourself to me and help to deliver me from mine."

"Ah," replied Grenville, "this is really delightful. I always thought talking to you a pleasure that could never be improved upon; but to-night, it will have the added charm of an infidelity."

Lady Ashford's age was not far from seventy, but much of the beauty for which she once was famous remained with her, and there still floated in her eyes a St. Martin's summer of youth.

"Is this," she said, looking at Grenville, "the result of a poet's philosophy? But you're no longer a poet—I ought to have remembered that; and now I remember that I want you to tell me what you are. Come, I must have your whole story out of you—the metamorphosis of the poet into the man of action. When did the change begin? How did you grow practical?"

Grenville was a man who hated to talk about himself; but Lady Ashford was at once so firm and so fascinating that she had soon extracted from him the information she asked for.

"Well," she said, when he had finished, "and so it all came to this. The world, when first you entered it, was enchanted for you by two necromancers, love and religion, who colored it with colors and filled it with objects of ambition, which gradually, as years went on, dissolved or faded from your sight, till at last you woke up to what you now consider realities. The first reality that came home to you was the want of some more money; accordingly you began to dabble in what you describe as business; and you found that your wits were far sharper than you expected. You hadn't however made a fortune in the first six weeks, and you were consequently beginning to think that real life was a failure, when you suddenly stumbled into a by-road to success—a sort of success that is brilliant beyond your hopes, and that gives you a promise of fortune and fame as well. Now to a man ambitious like you—for you always were ambitious—Mr. Grenville, you need not deny it; I have not studied men's temperaments for nothing—to a man ambitious like you, this luck ought to be intoxicating. Still it is not exactly success as you used to dream of it. You dreamed of it with the feelings of a poet; you achieve it as a practical man. I want you to tell me if it disappoints or satisfies you."

"When it comes," said Grenville, "I will tell you with great pleasure; but I am not aware that I have yet succeeded in anything."

"You have the opportunity of succeeding," said Lady

Ashford, "and other people know you have; you excite expectations, though you have not yet satisfied them; and that, to a man in your position, is success in its most flattering stage. You always were a figure of some interest in society; all of a sudden you are beginning to make a stir in it. I had realized this to-night before you entered the drawing-room. I saw it afterward in the way in which people looked at you. I heard it in their voices when they pronounced your name. You cannot pretend you were unconscious of the same thing yourself. I was told long ago, by somebody who ought to have known, that nothing is so sweet to a man as this first breath of applause, that it makes him feel as if his life were beginning to rise on wings. The dawn of fame must be like the dawn of love. I used often to say that to myself. I want you to be honest with me, and tell me your own experience."

"Well," said Grenville with a laugh of real embarrassment, "if you really wish for honesty, I will expose myself by admitting that—I hardly know how to put it—that I have a sort of sense of success in me, more or less like what you mention; and, I suppose it pleases me. Yes—yes, of course it does. I have so long thought and felt to so little purpose, that there is something exhilarating in the knowledge that at last I am about to act; and in the hope that I shall not, as I began to think I should, pass through the world leaving no mark behind me, having done nothing, and having been nothing. I admit too," he went on in a lighter tone, "that I am becoming conscious of a certain fuss being made about me. What trifles in themselves these little things are! And yet I am bound to confess that they have the same

effect on me that a glass of champagne has on a man who has been long tired. I admit so much; but I admit nothing more. As to feeling as if I were going to rise on wings—I might have felt that once, but I certainly do not now. My wings by this time have hardly a feather left on them, though originally they were plumed with illusions bright as a bird of paradise. And as to the dawn of fame being like the dawn of love——”

“Well?” said Lady Ashford.

“As to that,” he replied, “I can say nothing. What is love like? I cannot even remember. You look as if you didn’t believe me; but I am not talking for effect. I have known the experience—the beginning, the middle, and the end of it, till I am as familiar with it, in one way, as I am with the journey to Brighton; but the impulse that made me undertake the journey is gone. I cannot even recall it.”

Lady Ashford looked at him for a few moments in silence and then said, “Never mind; one day it will return to you. The real story of your life, Mr. Grenville, is still to come.”

“I don’t think so,” said Grenville laughing. “All the same you are like an angel when you make the prophecy; and I—well, I hear it like Sarah behind the tent-door. No, no; the impulse is gone forever; and the only thing now that even faintly suggests it to me, is the longing produced in the mind by certain aspects of nature—the miraculous blue, for instance, of certain mountains or of the sea, a blue alive, like the blue in the veins of a woman’s hand, allures me—maddens me—I don’t know what it does to me. It makes me wish to be melted into it, and lost in it.”

"If you can still feel all that," said Lady Ashford, "about salt water and hills, your days of feeling are not numbered yet. You think they are, because you have felt often; and you probably flatter yourself that these past attacks of the fever are a sort of inoculation which will keep you safe for the future. That may be the case with some men, but I am sure it is not so with you."

"And why," asked Grenville, with a certain natural curiosity, "why do you think it is not so with me?"

"Because," she said, "in spite of your good spirits, in spite of your sense of success, I see a want in your eyes, I hear a want in your voice, which a woman recognizes, and of which she knows the meaning. The reason why love, thus far, has made so little impression on your memory, is not that you found so little in it, but that you looked for so much more; and this *much more* your nature is still waiting for. Listen, and let me teach you a small fragment of philosophy. Some of the women—I hope you will not be shocked at me—some of the women who have loved best have been women who found that they could not love their husbands. And why? They have learnt how much they longed to give and receive, by realizing how much one man could neither understand or give. People talk about first love; but what they talk about is a fiction just as the Golden Age is. First love is really like a first attempt on the fiddle. The magic and the music only come with experience. To love successfully you must often have loved in vain. You think this is a paradox, but it isn't. To make love complete—you may take a woman's word for it—it must be not only a giver of joy, but a healer of sorrow also; a resurrection of hope rather than its birth.



A boy's love may be life; a man's love is another life. This, Mr. Grenville, is the love which you are waiting for; or, if you like it better, which is somewhere waiting for you. And you may trust me in this, that when such love comes to a man, the passions of youth can show nothing to equal it. Don't despise my prophecy, because it comes from an old woman. You will find your fate; and old as I am I still remember mine."

"Yes," said Grenville, half involuntarily; "but you are a woman, and a woman who has once loved and remembers it can never be old."

"And a man," said Lady Ashford, "is always young, so long as a woman who is young loves him."

"Unfortunately," said Grenville laughing, "no young woman loves *me*." But then he suddenly checked himself, and went on in a different tone: "Your prophecy, Lady Ashford, is charming. It has only one fault, and that is, I cannot believe in it. Do you remember how just now you summed up the biography of my youth? You said that love and religion were two necromancers who had enchanted life for me. You were wrong. The real necromancer was the Imagination, which we used to think was the child of the other two, but which science and experience at last show us to be their parent. The children die of shame when we discover their parentage; and the Imagination itself cannot survive its children."

The conversation was here arrested by a sharp and startling sound. The chimney of a large lamp, which was in front of Grenville, had broken; some disturbance was caused by the servants' removing it from the table; and when Grenville again was in a position to speak or

listen, Lady Ashford's ear had been captured by her other neighbor.

"And so that is Mr. Grenville, to whom you have just been talking?" Lord R—— was saying slowly, in the loud penetrating tone which deaf people, who require it to be applied to themselves, are not unfrequently accustomed to apply to others. Like many deaf and elderly people also, Lord R—— seemed always to be living in a little world of his own; and he had a charming habit of discussing people who were close to him, as if he were as much out of their hearing as they were out of his. "A very clever, promising young man," he went on. "I knew his father intimately—a very, very, very clever young man."

Grenville judiciously tried to escape from his own praises, and fixed his attention on the opposite side of the table. He found no difficulty in keeping it there. For the first time he saw an object facing him, which up to now the lamp had entirely hidden. It was the young girl—Lady Ashford's beautiful niece—to whom, before dinner, the Ambassador had been so gallantly devoting himself. It was impossible not to be struck by her—by her dazzling skin, by her dark melancholy eyes, and still more by an indefinable something—a something in her expression, her dress, her bearing—which gave her, despite her girlhood, the air of a married woman. Sitting next to her was Sir Septimus Wilkinson, talking to her with a voluble but elephantine eagerness, and giving point to his eloquence by gesticulating with his thick fingers. She, at the moment when Grenville first caught sight of her, was looking down with a sort of contemptuous self-possession, and amusing herself with examining

her own beautiful hands. A moment later, and for a moment only, he saw her glance up at the shapeless face close to her, as if doubting and wondering whether a thing like that could be really made of the same flesh and blood as herself. Rapid as the glance was, Grenville felt that he understood it. The second after the girl's eyes met his own. As they did so, they seemed to expand softly, a certain light flashed up out of their depths, and there was the slightest undulation imaginable in the lines of her scarlet lips. Then all was over; she coolly turned away from him, and with a condescending animation began to address Sir Septimus.

No sooner had this happened than he was once more conscious of his own name being mentioned in tones as audible as before. "And now," Lord R—— was saying, "he's going to be married—that is to say, if he succeeds in his new career." Lady Ashford tapped him on his threadbare sleeve with her fan, doing her best to stop him. He took it for encouragement, and his voice became even louder. "The young lady's Lord Solway's niece—Lady Evelyn Standish—and if she marries with her uncle's consent she will have a considerable fortune. He will consent if Mr. Grenville succeeds; he told me so himself, but the matter is not yet to be spoken about."

Lady Ashford did the only thing to be done. She stopped any further disclosures by turning abruptly from the speaker; and she fixed her eyes with an odd look upon Grenville. There was embarrassment in them, and amusement in them, and also a wondering and half-reproachful inquiry.

"Mr. Grenville," she said, "this revelation is a judgment on you. Here is the man who never can love

again. When we were talking just now, you were arguing under false colors."

"No," said Grenville gently, "I think not. If I marry I could still give my wife affection, but not—Never mind! Let us talk no more about it."

"I'll tell you," said Lady Ashford, "what I should advise your doing. If you don't keep a diary, begin one this very night. Put down in it all that you feel now, being quite honest, and, if you can be—which I don't think you could be—quite clear. The time will come when you will laugh as you look back at it. Or perhaps you won't laugh. Perhaps you will do something else."

"Do you think," said Grenville, "that I shall only learn to love, by finding out that I cannot love my wife—whom, I may as well tell you, I have not yet asked to marry me? But come—let us drop *me*. As a subject, I must be quite exhausted. Suppose we talk about that lovely young lady opposite. I never saw such a pair of eyes in my life. Who is she?"

"She is my niece—Juanita Markham. Her mother was a Viennese. She has come here to see her relations. Yes—she has beautiful eyes—poor girl! She, too, Mr. Grenville, has all her life before her."

"And what," said Grenville, "is the fate you predict for her? Do you think that she, before she learns to love, must find out that she cannot love her husband?"

"I hope not," said Lady Ashford with sudden sadness. "There are many things which we excuse in ourselves, and which we should yet dread for our children. See—we are moving. We all go out together. There is Princess Plekonitz looking at you over her shoulder."

Grenville rose from his seat with a mind curiously

exhilarated. The drawing-room, when he reached it, had a brilliance for him which he had not noticed in it before; and roused some forgotten sense in him of the pride and the possibilities of life. He was soon surrounded by certain of the more distinguished guests; and though he knew them all well, and had long been accustomed to their civilities, they seemed, when they now addressed him, to be offering him an unfamiliar tribute. The apple of ambition was an apple which, in early youth, he had constantly looked up to, expecting that it would fall into his lap; it did not do so, and he had been slowly ceasing to think about it; but now, all of a sudden, it was close to him—it was actually at his lips, and his palate woke from its torpor, as the scent entered his nostrils.

From one flattering moment he passed on to another. What noiseless trifle can be more flattering to a man, than to find that the eyes of a woman, for whose attention others are contending, have been fixed on and following him, in the hope that he would attend to her? Grenville found this presently, in the case of Princess Plekonitz. There was a circle round her of people talking, or waiting to talk to her; but as soon as his eyes met hers, he saw it was himself she was thinking about. She beckoned him to her sofa with a movement of her fan and of her eyebrows; and the others, as he came up to her, separated. A couple of young men, however, did not go far, and he soon understood the reason; for sitting beside her on the sofa was the beautiful Miss Juanita Markham.

The Princess with effusion held out a wrinkled hand to him. She expressed a vivacious pleasure at thus

unexpectedly seeing him; she recalled the old times when he had stayed at her house in England; and complimented him on his prospects in a way that would have sounded fulsome if the strong foreign accent, which she had acquired in living abroad, had not sufficed to confer a peculiar privilege on her English. All the time, however, that this was going on, though he listened and responded with really genuine feeling, he could not prevent a certain part of his consciousness being occupied with Miss Markham, and the fate of her two admirers. These last he had taken in at a glance. They were indeed attached to the Embassy, and he more or less knew both of them. They were well-bred young men, with the quietest manners imaginable; and if ordinary expensive dissipation means knowledge of life, they were probably right in flattering themselves that they were complete men of the world; but the girl's manner to them—a manner even quieter than their own—reduced each of them—Grenville could plainly see this—one after the other, in his own estimation, to a boy. Their first observations had been made with a smiling confidence. She had smiled also, and replied with complete civility; but joined to that civility was a yet more complete indifference, which seemed to produce, as it were, some chemical change in their characters. They blushed; they repeated their words; their laughs became doubtful and apologetic; and they presently found that nothing was left for them but to retreat with an air that betrayed discomfiture, while it aimed heroically at indifference.

"Listen," the Princess was by this time saying to Grenville; "the thing is quite simple; I will tell you all the particulars."

Whatever the particulars were they threatened to be long in telling; and Grenville, who had been standing hitherto, unconsciously scanned the sofa, as if to see whether there was room for him to be seated. Miss Markham, with extraordinary quickness, caught the meaning of his look and, raising her eyes to his with a full unflinching softness, moved so as to make a place for him between the Princess and herself.

"Thank you," he said, as he sat down; "I hope I am not crushing your dress."

"You are not," she replied, with a smile on her lips which were half parted. "But I think you have done one thing. Do you see what it is? You have hurt a feather of my fan." And, as if to explain the injury thus complained of, with a movement that might have seemed accidental, she drew the feather across his hand.

"Allow me to look at it," he said, with a slight accent of ceremony. "I trust I have done no harm." And he offered, as he spoke, to take the fan from her to examine it. But she, giving the feather a little semi-petulant pull, said, "No, after all I think it has not been broken." And showing him for a moment the faint remains of a smile, she folded her fan before her and gave her attention to the carpet.

This little episode over, and it did not occupy a minute, Grenville turned to the Princess, and seemed at once to forget it, in the interest of the subject which he was soon busy discussing with her. It was a subject, as anyone might have seen, who caught any fragment of the conversation, involving the settlement of many practical details; and anyone might have seen also that a conclusion was at last arrived at about it, which was highly satis-

factory to both the parties interested, and gave to Grenville, indeed, a look of greater excitement than his face had shown before during any part of the evening.

At this juncture there was a movement of some of the guests departing. Lady Ashford was one of them. Coming toward the sofa, in order to call her niece to her, she began speaking to Grenville, who arose to say good-by. And now the entertainment yielded him its last incident. The niece, like the aunt, had turned toward him also, as if to include herself in a common process of leave-taking; and then, with a look in her eyes of deliberate hesitation, she held out her hand to him, and took his in a lingering clasp.

As soon as she was gone, he turned round to the Princess. "You told me," he said, "that I had new prospects before me. The prospect which you hold out to me is the newest and most fascinating of all."



## CHAPTER II.

**GRENVILLE**, that night in his bed, found himself pleasantly restless, as he had hardly found himself since his earlier London seasons, when he walked home from balls through the dewy stillness of Piccadilly, with music and palm trees in his memory, some girl's voice in his heart, and the cool, dim primrose of the summer morning in his eyes. He made many efforts to sleep, but just as each seemed succeeding, some fresh thought would touch him, which provokingly flattered him into wakefulness; so that at last he got up again, and, partially redressing himself, he prepared to act on the only one of these thoughts which was at the present moment capable of being put into action. "I will do," he said to himself, "what Lady Ashford told me to do. I will begin a diary. I will describe myself to myself. I will make a chart, as it were, of my own present situation. Some day or other the reading of it may keep me awake. At any rate, the writing of it will now help me to sleep."

He found a note-book in his dressing bag sufficiently suitable for his purpose; the earlier pages, indeed, being full of memoranda, but the greater part being blank.

"The day after to-morrow," he began abruptly, "I am going to do something entirely strange to me and unexpected, which makes me feel like Tannhäuser with the Horsel suddenly opening to him. But this I must

come to presently. I must start with what is more important.

“For the last eight or nine months, a crisis in my life has been preparing itself. To-night, for the first time, I feel fully conscious of it. Let me consider.

“I was always ambitious. Lady Ashford was right there; but, in saying this, let me do myself one piece of justice; for I *will* be just to myself. Ambition with me was only part of a wider hunger or aspiration, just as passion with a true lover is only a part of love. Passion alone is a cloud that hides the sky. Passion, when a part of affection, is a cloud crimson with sunrise. By the way, how easily that slipped from my pen; and yet, though I know it is true, it hardly is a truth that I feel. It is the sort of thing I should have written in the days when I experienced love. I suppose it comes into my mind now, because I am now undergoing an excitement somewhat similar, though the cause is so very different. Again—what have I written? Why, the very thing that Lady Ashford said to me at dinner. ‘The dawn of fame,’ she said, ‘must be like the dawn of love’; and I laughed at her. Could she only see this diary, the turn to laugh would be hers. However, to go back to my ambition, what I mean to say for myself is this: that, though I longed to receive the external insignia of success—fame, consideration, place, and personal deference, I longed to deserve these quite as much as to receive them. Had I deserved them without receiving them, I should perhaps have despised life. Had I received them without deserving them, I should certainly have despised myself.

“Well—let me go on, continuing to be quite honest.

Always, so long as I can remember anything, I have had in my blood—I can describe it in no other way, a consciousness that I was a person who for some reason ought to be a personage. To me this seemed to be simply in the fitness of things. It is a fitness however that I have been always missing. Well-born and well-connected as I am, I have been without the means of distinguishing myself; and not to be distinguished, for a man like me, is a humiliation. It is to have fallen from an estate to which my hopes instinctively had raised me. In one's prime such a condition may be bearable, when social life still possesses its piquancy; but in maturer age—above all in old age, what a wretched thing would be such a life, and such a position as mine. My early fame as a poet is already nearly evaporated, like stale scent on a pocket-handkerchief. I represent a family that at last is as good as ruined. My mortgaged property yields me fourteen hundred a year, half of which I give to two helpless relations. My house is let to a brewer; and I live in a London lodging. How often have I shuddered at certain old men of fashion, with no home except a London lodging and their clubs, and with no life except dining, shooting, and visiting with a dwindling circle of friends; and I have seen in their old age a flattered foreshadowing of my own.

“But now, all has changed. I feel as if a fog had lifted; or as if, after long walking on sand, I had suddenly gained firm ground. I am in a fair way now to making myself really distinguishable; for a time at all events I shall receive a considerable income; and whatever advantages I thus gain, I may hope to consolidate them by a marriage which will not only bring me for-

tune, but a home and affection also. Let me jot down the facts on which this hope is founded. Lady Evelyn Standish I knew well when she was a child. A year ago, I met her again, a grown up young lady. I met her often; but I did not give much thought to her, till I gradually became conscious that whenever I spoke in her presence, she listened to me; and that she constantly followed me with her frank guileless eyes. Hers is the kind of charm that one only sees if one looks for it; but the moment I saw it, it was a charm that drew me toward her, because—and in this I do not think I deceive myself—for some reason or other she was herself drawn toward me. The idea of a marriage with her soon shaped itself in my mind; but it was an idea which at that time I put aside as impossible. I knew that if she married with the approbation of an uncle, who is her guardian, she would in all probability have a considerable fortune, but neither to her nor to him would I present myself as a penniless fortune-hunter. Then my chance came; then my prospects changed; and without delay, though not without diffidence, I approached her guardian, and explained myself completely to him. He received me with a kindness that was beyond all my expectations; and if I do not, within the next six months, disappoint both myself and him he will fully sanction me in doing my best to win her. And he will do more. He will do what is a complete surprise to me. He will—that is, supposing the marriage happens—settle the property on her which marches with my own; and he will make arrangements by which, within a measurable time, my own may be freed from the greater part of its encumbrances. Can this be true? It all seems to me like a

dream; and yet it seems to me at the same time less as if I were dreaming, than as if I were waking up to reality.

"I feel as if my personality were at last acquiring a body; or as if my limbs had long been bound, and were at last free and I could use them, moving weights with my arms, and realizing the power of my muscles.

"And now I come to the point for the sake of discussing which I was recommended to begin this diary. I am brought to it naturally. I have spoken about a wife. What are my feelings about love? At this moment they are so slight and so lukewarm, that I am actually irritated by the mere idea of discussing them. This sounds a strange confession to make, after just confessing myself intent on a happy marriage; but it is not so strange as it sounds. Let me be bold and explain myself by a paradox. I believe I am fit to marry, for this precise reason that I can no longer love. For by love, as I use the word now, and as Lady Ashford used it, what do we mean? We mean that despotic emotion which claims to extinguish, and which does extinguish while it lasts, all other emotions as the sun extinguishes a candle; which claims not to complete and crown the other blessings of life, but to supersede them. That is the love of which I have ceased to be capable; and I say well that I am now fit to marry, because I am no longer capable of it. For let me look the matter in the face fairly. The life of a man like myself ought to be largely in his work; unless it is so, it will be incomplete. But if you love a woman in the way I speak of, every interest is a rival to her; every interest is a wrong. Such love creates sins, just as the Scotch Sunday does. It turns a career into a kind of mental adultery. For a man like myself, then, the

love that would absorb all life, is not fit to occupy any part of it. To love intensely is to be always saying one's prayers: and a man like myself must labor as well as pray. I am thus fortunate in being able to say this of myself—that I can hardly now conceive of love as a thing that should practically alter the general arrangements of my life, though I cannot only conceive but long for an affection that shall complete them. Yes—now I come to another part of these confessions; and I confess I make it with greater comfort to myself. Yes—I have done with love; but there is another feeling—we may call it not love but affection—which condescends to accommodate itself to circumstances, and to take its luck along with them. It does not complain, like an unreasonable woman in a railway-carriage, if, when the train is full, it cannot have a compartment to itself: nor does it ask that others should be crushed together, in order to leave it the luxury of two seats; but taking quietly such place as may be vacant for it, it insensibly humanizes and blesses its fellow-travelers instead of trying to push them out of the windows. Such an affection I can not only understand, but I long to give and receive it. That I have it to give, I know. That I shall receive it, I hope. It will not transfigure life with 'the light that never was on sea or land'; but it will be the light and warmth of a hearth that makes the chamber of life habitable, and which robs even the shadows of their mysteries, their coldness, and their gloom."

In writing these last words Grenville had turned over a page; and was about to proceed, when something suddenly checked him. "What on earth," he exclaimed, "is here?" The cause of his exclamation was

some lines scribbled in pencil. They were faint and not very legible, and he moved the book toward the candle. It was only when he had done this, that he saw them to be in his own handwriting, and also recognized them as verses. With puzzled curiosity he began deciphering them. "Can these be mine?" he said to himself. "Yes—they certainly must be. And yet when did I write them? To whom did I write them? When was I in a mood of mind about anyone like what they try to express? Stay—I think I have it. 'Salt seas'—'cinerarias!' Yes—I remember now, but it merely comes back to me like a dream. As the verses are here," he continued, "I may as well write them in. They will be a witness in my diary, either for or against, the kind of character which I have now outgrown."

The verses in question were as follows:

Faith may live, though long doubts chill it ;  
Charity will suffer much ;  
But for Hope—a touch can kill it,  
And it rises at a touch.

Where the cinerarias glisten  
In your garden by the sea,  
At my side you once would listen,  
Till your cheek was close to me.

Where your caverns breathe and murmur  
With the salt sea's sound and scent,  
Day by day your hand was firmer  
On my arm : until I went

Whispering in imagination  
To your image in the air,  
All that love can teach to passion,  
All that both can learn from prayer.

Is there nothing—nay, come near me !  
Look me in the face to-day !—  
Nothing which, before you hear me,  
Tells you all I die to say ?

Where your cinerarias glisten,  
Come, and I will tell you. Come !  
Lean your ear once more and listen.  
What is this ? My lips are dumb.

Do your eyes, whose kind attention  
Holds me, as when last we met,  
Not remember——? But why mention  
What I see your eyes forget ?

Let it go ; for now I know  
All those seeds of vain desire  
In your memory melt like snow ;  
But on mine they lie like fire !

Grenville read the verses over several times, smiling incredulously. He then took up his pen again. "What wretched words for songs," he wrote, "can be buoyed up into poetry, like a ship lifted by a tide, if they are set to passionate music, and sung with feeling. And that which music does for a song written by somebody else, may, in the case of the writer himself, be done for it by his own emotions. These verses of mine, for instance—I have no doubt, when I wrote them, there was some emotion at work in me, which made them for me full of sound and meaning. But now the emotion is gone, and they seem to me like something withered. They have lost a body, or they have lost a soul. They are like the ghost of a poem, or the fossil of a poem. They are in fact a type of my former self ; and an illustration of how it survives in me—that self I have outgrown so utterly.



"And yet not so. I traduce myself. I can no longer love, it is true; but the fact that I have loved, survives in its present effect on me, making me a different man to what I should have been otherwise. I am not indeed haunted by any personal regrets. I am completely cured of every individual passion. The state of the case is this. All the women I have known, seem in my memory to have become one, who has all depths and varieties of temperament, of insight, and of feeling, united in her: and this woman—or rather this womanhood—though silently withdrawing itself below the horizon of youth, is not lost: it colors the air of maturity with all the colors of a sunset. When the color goes, will age show the light of heaven?"

At this point Grenville paused. Then he began several sentences, scratching each out when he had written it, and again pausing. Then he proceeded thus:

"Most men love, I suppose, but the love-memories of most of them are like decayed, or at best like dried, rose leaves. The love memories of others are like attar of roses. For these men, love in this changed form penetrates all their lives, breathing among their thoughts like the breath of spring in a wood, sometimes like the breath of autumn, giving a soul to everything. This is the secret of my own feeling for nature. That feeling does not, as Lady Ashford said it did, mean that I shall love again. It means only that I have loved already; and each beautiful prospect—a purple Italian twilight, or old silvery town shining in mist on a mountain-side—is a keepsake of some lost passion, and inspires life, as passion did, with what really is the essence of youth—a sense of possibilities still waiting for fulfillment.

"I see that, without thinking about it, I have mentioned two things together—an Italian twilight and an old town. There was more in that than mere accident, for the two things represented by them are curiously and closely connected—Nature and the historic past. Just as Nature suggests the lost romance of ones' own life, so does the past represent romance in general. Each charms us by producing an illusion which will never be destroyed, because each presents us with a dream which will never again be a reality. We see the present reflected in the past shining like a Golden Age, as we see the sky in water.

"This is no mere imagined pleasure, though it is due to the imagination. It is real, it is delightful, it is invigorating. My good spirits at this moment are mainly due to the fact that unexpectedly I am going to have a fresh taste of it. Here comes my story. I have worked so hard during the past eight or nine months, that I found myself growing gradually quite unable to sleep—not, however, for the reasons that are keeping me awake now. What keeps me awake now is my imagination holding a holiday; what has been keeping me awake lately has been the refusal of my brain to take one. Schedules, statistics, calculations, drafts of financial schemes—these are the things that have haunted me at night like furies, driving sleep from my heavy eyelids as vigilantly as they could, and turning such short dreams as they could not keep away into weary visions of pages of official paper, or grotesque echoes of official conversations. My health then came to be such that I was ordered a six weeks' rest, the first few days of which were to be merely a change of work, consisting of some

easy official business at Vienna. The remainder of the time was to be altogether my own. The Princess to-night asked me how I meant to spend it. 'At first,' I said, 'I was divided between two plans. One was an expedition along the Dalmatian coast, the other was a desultory wandering along certain less-known parts of Northern Italy, I am devoted,' I said, 'to old things—to old towns, old castles, old palaces, to the spectacle of old peasant life where it still remains unchanged, and old national costumes still flashing in embrowned market-places, and in Dalmatia or Italy I meant to have seen my fill of them. Here, however, at Vienna, I happened to learn from some friends of certain wonderful castles in Bohemia, and among the Karpathian Mountains.'

"The Princess screwed up her eyes with a smile of benign contempt.

" 'Bohemia,' she said, 'and the Karpathian Mountains! Stuff! If you want to see castles, come and stay with me in mine, in Hungary, and I will help you to see as many others as you wish. Don't laugh like that. When I give an invitation, I mean it. If you cared for new things, I should have been afraid to ask you; but if you really like what is musty, why there's no more to be said; and you will have in my old owl's nest a musty old woman into the bargain.'

" 'If you wish me to stay with you,' I said, 'till you even suggest what you call yourself, you would have to keep me for the term of my natural life.'

" 'Nonsense,' she answered, 'I don't want compliments. I want to know if you are going to do what I ask you. I go home to-morrow myself; and if you will arrive next day, a well-aired bed will be ready for you,

---

and the fire in the parlor lighted. So come—decide upon coming, and stay as long as you can amuse yourself.’

“The invitation was so unexpected, and I was so delighted with it, that I could at first hardly believe her serious. But I soon saw that she was. My evident pleasure pleased her; and without more ado we proceeded to trains and routes. The journey is easy enough. There is a station near the castle; and going one way one can reach it in ten hours; going another, one must sleep a night on the road. ‘The last way,’ she said, ‘was by far the most interesting, as it takes one through a beautiful part of Styria.’ I therefore selected that. I shall accordingly start the day after to-morrow, and the day after that I shall arrive at this mysterious castle. Five years ago I know one thing I should have done—I should have occupied the intervening day with calling on Lady Ashford—not for the sake of resuming my discussion with her, but of gratifying my curiosity by a further acquaintance with her niece. But now such a prospect is hardly even a temptation to me; though, perhaps, if the niece were before me, its force would be just appreciable.

“Well! so in a few days I shall be in the heart of a strange country—and a country how strange! how interesting! It is a country which always has haunted my imagination, owing to the fragments of description which from time to time I had heard of it. It is a country still of overgrown feudal households where the retainers loyally kiss the hands of their masters; where bears and wild boars roam in forests, whose alleys are watched by keepers in plumed hats, and in whose recesses brigands

hide themselves; where tribes of gypsies wander, and where gypsy bands play. It is a country which no doubt has known a political revolution, but no social revolution, or at the utmost only the shadow of one. Here is the past living still in the present. One crosses a Rubicon, and goes back a hundred and fifty years. Of course, to a certain extent, I write all this at random: the only Hungary that I know is the Hungary that I imagine. But I do not think, anyhow, I am wrong in expecting this—to inhale an atmosphere scented with the life of another century. Will not that be romance, as I said just now? Will it?

“Sleep—you are coming at last to me. I am coming to you, to pillow myself among happy prospects.”

### CHAPTER III.

It was nearly one o'clock when Grenville laid down his pen. At the same hour, two nights later, he was in a very different situation. His servant Fritz, an Austrian, who knew the country thoroughly, and to whom he committed the entire management of his journey, had just roused him up and extracted him from the drowsy twilight of a railway carriage—extracted him into a gust of night wind vaguely scented, and escorted him with his rugs and dressing-bags into the refreshment room of some unknown junction.

"Our train," said Fritz, "does not go for an hour. Perhaps, excellency, you will allow me to order a little supper for you. See," he said, taking a list of refreshments from a table, "this soup is good—you get it never in Vienna; these sausages are good; and this wine—you should taste that."

Partly by way of getting rid of the time, partly by way of acknowledging his servant's care for him, Grenville let the supper be ordered, and sat down to wait for it. Half awake as he was, the scene seemed like a dream to him. The air was hazy with gas-lit filaments of tobacco smoke; odd looking men with peaked caps and spectacles were beguiling their minutes with beer at little marble tables, while their luggage, mostly in the shape of miniature canvas portmanteaus, lay at their feet like dogs. Muffled women with bundles came and went, or sat wearily on

red velvet benches. Coffee machines with great brass domes gleamed at a long counter, and the walls, lined with pitch-pine, made a bare background for everything, checkered with advertisements of unfamiliar liqueurs and drinks. The whole place was charged with a sense of nocturnal traveling—of a fragment of active life strayed into the regions of sleep.

Grenville ate his supper with curiosity rather than appetite, and then went out and smoked his cigar upon the platform. Near, in a valley, were the street lights of some silent town; to the right and left were the scattered station buildings—masses of shadow starred with a colored lamp or two; and all around were hills covered with pine forests, which showed in the dim moonlight their serrated outlines against the sky. Grenville was ignorant of the name, and even of the locality, of the station. All the country round was steeped in the charm of mystery. By and by some figures issued from the refreshment-room, crossing the rails to another platform beyond; and before long, with a rumbling moan out of the silence, came a lighted passenger train, sliding and hissing, and arresting itself. A few moments more, and it has passed away like a somnambulist. Grenville looked at his watch, and his servant's voice at his ear said, "Our train next. It comes here in five minutes. Here, excellency, is the station master. He will keep a compartment, if he can, for you. I know him. His father was steward to the last Prince Plekonitz."

Grenville turned round, and acknowledged the profound bow of a functionary, whose gold braid glittered and whose whiskers shivered with authority. A whistle pierced the night; there was another rumbling moan;

and presently close to the group a procession of lighted windows, and shining sides of carriages bearing the word "Trieste" on them, moved and became stationary. The station master was as good as his word. With much ceremony, after a little talk with the guard, he bowed Grenville into a reserved compartment, saying to the former as he did so, "His excellency alights at G—. Your excellency will arrive there at half-past four in the morning."

"Certainly," said Grenville, smiling to himself, as he stretched himself out on the cushions, "I am an exception to the rule that no man is a hero to his valet. Fritz imagines me a minister of state already; and what is even more to the purpose, he communicates his own conception of me to his friends." The truth of this reflection was experienced even at G—, when in the chill obscurity of the station a commissionaire from the hotel, who had been joined by the guard the moment the train arrived, appeared at the door of the compartment, and assisted his excellency to descend. In these days everything has to be paid for; the bow of the departing guard indicated that he had been paid sufficiently; and Grenville before long, in a heavy rattling omnibus, was being shaken to pieces over the paving stones of a dim angular street. After lasting for ten minutes, this torture came to an end, and the vehicle halted abruptly under a huge resonant archway. Some men with lanterns emerged from a glass door; within one belated gas-jet gleamed on some stone stairs; and Grenville presently, in an atmosphere of ghostly quiet, was passing to his room by the gallery of a frescoed hall, one side of which was covered with a coat-of-arms, and bore the date of 1620. "This



inn, sir," said Fritz, as he opened his master's door, "is very old—more than two hundred years." And so it well might be, thought Grenville as he closed his eyes. Already, into the present, it seemed to his imagination that the past had projected a long fantastic shadow.

The dreams of sleep are killed by a bright morning. The dreams of our waking life take often a new vigor from it. So, next morning, for Grenville, a thousand new fancies, all of them children of the same waking dreamland, came floating into his rooms as Fritz opened the windows, and admitted, in doing so, a breath of that faint unfamiliar smell which whispers to a stranger's nerves the news that he is in a strange city. As for G——, it is no doubt perfectly true that many an Englishman might roam through every street of it and be struck by nothing in any of them, excepting its inferiority to Bayswater; but the minds of some men, if not their eyes, are color blind. To Grenville the very names of the shops, the conformation of the roofs and chimneys, and even the shape of the primitive cart wheels, were things which touched his imagination as a breeze touches the sea, and made it shiver into some new colors. Fritz was his guide for an hour or so, and did the honors of the place for him. By the middle of the day he was once more in the train, and was speeding away from roofs and streets and chimneys, and piercing the country, beyond whose borders was Hungary.

And now, indeed, a duller imagination than his might have found excitement in the scenes which were pouring past him. All the backgrounds of all the romances of the world seemed to him to be suddenly turning into realities; or else nature itself seemed to be turning

unreal, and to be receiving him into a universe of illusions. These mountains covered with interminable forests, these green winding valleys, with tiled hamlets gleaming in them, these deeply rutted roads flanked with wayside crosses, these water-mills with the Middle Ages clinging to their cumbrous wheels—pictures of this kind each seen for a minute or two, and vivified now and then by bright-colored rustic figures, came to Grenville all with a delightful magic about them—with an enchanted music like the overture to some new experience. Who has not at times, when traveling even in his own country, known some feeling similar? Who, catching sight, through the moving windows of the railway carriage, of some old orieled manor house, half hidden among its avenues, has not seen in it the casket of some inaccessible novel, and imputed some breath of love to the slopes where the deer wander? And if this can be felt at home in our own modernized England, how would the feeling not be quickened in Styria—a land where the following vision presently startled Grenville? An isolated rock, some thousand feet in height, scarred with precipices and fledged with enormous pines, among which gleamed an ascending line of towers, while crowning the summit was a castle spiked with pinnacles. Within view of this spectacle was a little wayside station at which the train stopped; so Grenville was able to assure himself that what he looked at really existed. The whole structure seemed perfect. Glass gleamed in the windows. The train moved on and his eyes became more expectant. By and by, nearer the line, a hunting-lodge peeped out of the forest, with a great black coronet daubed on its white plaster; then, far off, like a ship's masts on the

horizon, one or two towers rose above a sea of pine trees; then came a station, near to a red-roofed town, whose gray fortifications were marked by a line of lindens; and then another castle, half lost in a park, with fanciful Grecian temples scattered among the foliage.

At last, however, the aspect of things changed. The mountains died away into long low-lying slopes; and soon the train was moving in a sea-like expanse of plain. Now and again came some sloping uplands, on the ridge of one of which a castle or country house was seen distending itself, like a great bleached barrack; but these were left behind, and presently there was nothing but flatness, edged at the remotest skyline by low, faint hills, cobalt-colored. At first this transition tended to disappoint Grenville. Huge parallelograms of plow land, alternating with waste and pasture, chilled his fancy with homely reminiscences of Lincolnshire; but by and by his eyes came to be conscious of various strange details, which once more enchanted everything. The names of the stations had become uncouth and alien; the words on the doors of the waiting-rooms and the offices were in an un-European language, suggesting no conjecturable meaning. Here and there on the plain, watching his wandering charge, was some solitary shepherd, or swineherd, grasping his long crook, and loosely covered with a capote of Oriental fashion; while above the roofs of villages islanded in sprouting orchards, the towers of the churches showed themselves with bulging Oriental domes. Grenville now knew where he was. Everything spoke of Hungary.

So the hours wore on, the prospect hardly changing itself, till at last the traveler, thrusting his head out of

the window, descried in the distance a new distinguishing feature—an enormous poplar avenue straight as a line, crossing the whole landscape, and disappearing on each horizon. Watching this with a vague feeling of curiosity, he saw the trees grow more and more distinct; soon, between them and him, a small town showed itself—a church, some rows of houses, and the chimney of one engine-house. Passing these, the train slacked its speed, and then stopped with a jerk at a dwarfed, disconsolate station. Here, among a group of farmers and earth-stained peasants, was a figure whose presence distinguished this station from all the others—the figure of a footman, having a red cockade in his hat, and a long well-made overcoat, bright with immense gilt buttons. In a moment Fritz appeared at the carriage door; and Grenville knew the journey was all but ended.

Outside the gate were waiting a spruce-looking brougham and a high outlandish break, with some wild-eyed gypsies staring at them. Grenville was presently at home among the civilized cushions of the former; and the horses, at the sound of the whip, plunged forward impetuously. One incongruous sensation at once surprised and amused him, and that was the rocking and jolting of the eminently well-hung vehicle, which told a refreshing tale of the savage character of the road. In a few minutes a sharp turn was taken, and then he saw he was in the great poplar avenue. On each side was a deep irregular ditch, beyond were glimpses of tiled barns and cottages, and ahead of him, in the distance, it seemed that the road was blocked by some vague masses of building, on which something or other glittered. In due time all this explained itself. The brougham was approaching

a long buff-colored wall, built of stone elaborately dressed, and enriched with ciphers at intervals; and in the middle of this was a florid Italian gateway, high over which was lifted a gilded princely coronet. Some doors were opened, a man in a green livery raised a hat full of plumes to the carriage; gravel crunched under the wheels; some barefooted women were visible, grubbing in unkempt flower beds; then came shadow and echo, and the horses tramped under an archway; they crossed a well-like court surrounded by walls and windows, and drew up under a second archway beyond. Here on a step was standing a majestic porter, with gold lace on his coat and a gold-headed staff of office in his hand. Through the door behind him was visible a great ascending staircase, on which were stationed several liveried servants, a wizened little dwarf, who might have been either sixteen or sixty, and a steward who would have done honor to any German melodrama, as he smiled and blinked a respectful benediction on the scene. Grenville feared for a moment that they would all of them be kissing his hand—an act which, though he approved of it in theory, would, he felt, be embarrassing in practice. As a matter of fact, however, they merely muttered something and bowed; and somehow or other between them conducted him up the staircase. This was not unlike the staircase of a palace at Genoa. There was the same spaciousness, the same fine proportions, though the stairs and balustrades were of coarse stone, not marble, and the walls were rudely whitewashed. But a life-size portrait of Maria Theresa was on one side, a cardinal simpered superb benevolence on the other; and facing the landing was a wigged general under a canopy, turning a velvet

shoulder to an army being massacred in the background. Grenville found at this point that the dwarf alone was conducting him. He was ushered through two bare anterooms, whose walls were dingy with pictures. A farther door was opened. He heard a voice that he recognized; and the Princess, full of smiles, was greeting him in a good-sized drawing-room. Here everything had an oddly familiar look—tables, carpet, and sofas. It all suggested England—only an England just robbed of its comfort. There was English comfort, however, in the sight of the tea-table ready for him; and he and the Princess were soon happily seated with nothing between them but a service of old Vienna china.

"You mustn't be frightened," she said, "at finding me quite alone. Some time next week there will be a few people coming—Count C——, perhaps, who was once Ambassador in London; and a nice little niece of mine with two angels of children. To-night, too, at dinner, I have company for you in the shape of the priest. He talks nothing but Hungarian, so I must be his interpreter. Poor man—this will make his conversation go further than usual. You see," she went on, "I have taken you at your word; and you will have nothing to amuse you here but the things you told me you cared about—a half-civilized country which is strange to you, and an old draughty castle, where I hope you are already at home. Hark!" she exclaimed sharply, "I believe I hear my grandchildren. If it's not too dark to see, come outside and look at them."

He opened a window for her, and they emerged on the leaded roof of a portico. Below was an enormous court, inclosed symmetrically by out-buildings, and having in

the middle a grass plot, which encircled a towering obelisk.

"Ah," said the Princess, "my beauties! Look at them, there they are—all waddling up to the old Prince Ludwig's monument."

Grenville's eye followed the direction of hers; and thus guided he discovered a flock of turkeys straying about at will as if the whole place were a farmyard.

"Look! look!" said the Princess, smiling at them through her spectacles. "That's Tommy and that's Francis Joseph. Don't you like my grandchildren? And there behind that grand gate are my great-nephews and great-nieces, the pigs. Ain't I foolish?" she went on as she turned away. "I live so much alone that my fancies are my companions."

Grenville meanwhile had been contemplating the poplar avenue whose slim vista reached away into the twilight beyond an entrance opposite to him that was guarded by two great statues. "That avenue," said the Princess, "was made by my husband's grandfather, to form a link between two distant properties. In that direction it goes for more than sixty miles, and sixteen in the other; and this castle is stuck on it like a piece of meat on a skewer. How dark it is getting! but still, I can tell you a little of our geography. On one side of us is our town—you would call it a village; on the other the park, into which your bedroom looks; and north and south are our poplars and open country. That great building is a riding-school; the other that faces it is a ballroom; and those two things like temples to the right and left of the entrance, coachmen and gardeners live now in them; but forty years back they were the quar-

ters of a guard of honor. Yes," she said, looking at him with an amused twinkle in her eyes, "we have only just ceased to be interesting savages. I hope you'll discover to-morrow that we're not quite civilized yet. Hark, that bell means it is half-past six. We dine at seven. I will have you shown to your room. Don't dress; put on merely a morning coat; and listen—one piece of advice; take your hat with you and wear it in these cold passages."

The dwarf, who was found in the anteroom, and who seemed a kind of groom of the chambers, actually had Grenville's hat ready for him; and guiding him down the stairs to a vaulted corridor on an entresol, landed him at last in a bedroom that was vaulted also, though the curves of the roof, as well as the walls, were incongruously covered with a cheap English paper. Having made the toilette enjoined him, Grenville retraced his steps, and found the Princess and the priest already waiting him in the drawing-room. The priest rose deferentially and, with both hands on his stomach, made a bend of the body toward him with a smile interpreted as a bow. The Princess rattled through a bilingual introduction, and then said, "Take your hats, and let us come in to dinner." They passed out through the anteroom, across the head of the staircase, and presently reached a large circular chamber, rudely frescoed, so as to look like a ruinous temple, with a broken dome for its roof, and ferns sprouting out of its wall.

Compared with an English dinner the repast was primitively simple. The dishes were few, and each was presented twice; there was nothing on the table but a dish of pears, and biscuits; and there was one wine only—a



red wine of the country. To Grenville, fresh from the luxuries of Vienna and London, all this seemed like a happy retrogression into shadow-land; and the number of clumsily reverential servants who shuffled round so bare a board, deepened this vague impression. A mere accident deepened it yet further. The Princess worked industriously as interpreter between the priest and Grenville; but presently Grenville, feeling that he cut rather a helpless figure, asked if the priest was able to talk Latin. The good man's face at once lighted up, and a smile widened the curve of his smooth overflowing cheeks. With his knife arrested an inch in front of his mouth, he emitted first a cough, and then a few halting words, which Grenville barely recognized through their unaccustomed pronunciation; but to which, however, he bravely responded by some others, imitating as well as he could the pronunciation of his neighbor. In the course of a few minutes the two began just to understand each other. As time went on they got more shameless and confident, and gradually casting to the winds all reverence for grammatical virtue, they became intelligible as they ceased to attempt correctness. The Princess was delighted. She asked in Hungarian and English what they were saying, and by and by she was informed that they had got on the subject of the castle. The castle to the priest was the most magnificent object in the universe; and he evidently felt a kind of personal pride in recounting to a stranger all the wonders contained in it. Moreover as this kind of catalogue obviated the necessity for verbs, he continued it in the drawing-room till the early hour arrived for him and his cassock to bow themselves out and vanish. . "Theatrum

cena—proscenium—” these were some of the echoes  
: by him in his listener’s ears—“arma cum multis  
amis—arma antiquissima—documenta—libri—medii  
i reliquiæ—mirabilia multa—permulta—admiranda!  
væ—cervi—latifundia prodigiosa.”

## CHAPTER IV.

THE expectations which Grenville took that night to bed with him, were well fulfilled by the experience of the following week; and the hush that pervaded the place owing to the absence of company, left him full leisure to appreciate the new impressions that were invading him. He woke each morning in his arched chamber to find his coffee at his bedside, in exquisite old pink china. He looked from the window on the giant trees of the park—a park planted after the fashion of regal France, in long alleys that radiated from an open space in the center. When his window was open, there would come an influx of air which had all the warmth of summer, and all the odor of spring; and he would steal out early down a narrow winding staircase, and wander at will among the huge trunks and the primroses, treading on moss, and watching the roofs and outlines of the castle. Wherever he turned was something with the stamp of *ancienna régime* on it. There was a long orangery built in the seventeenth century; a kitchen garden with forcing houses hardly later in date; and as to the castle itself, its newest parts or features—the great courtyard which was meant to be grandly classical—some Corinthian pilasters stuck against mediæval walls, and some Italian vases stuck on mediæval parapets—these were the work of a lady, not a Princess Plekonitz, whom a Prince Plekonitz had imported here from the court of

Louis Quatorze. Grenville each morning saw them all with the dew on them; while on every side of him, the innumerable buds of spring swelled and brightened into one growing illumination of green.

Then, too, within doors the castle unfolded its details. He came upon rows of pictures painted with rude force, representing wars on the Turkish border, and full of burning towns, falling flags with the crescent on them, and savage turbaned heads being severed by Hungarian sabers. The old steward lured him up many dusty stairs, and introduced him to a veritable museum hidden in the topmost story. Here were whitewashed walls, festooned with jeweled saddle cloths of crimson and green velvet—the plunder of Moslem camps. In one room were antique saddles, of which some had emeralds in their stirrups; in another was battered armor, and great rusty lances; in another matchlocks and models of old artillery; and in another a pile of faded Turkish pavilions. Then, again, under rafters that smelt of cobwebs, were worm-eaten presses whose contents exhaled a different sentiment—dies for money, which the princes once had the right of coining; toys of forgotten children; rapiers with tarnished handles, rouge-pots, velvet masks, and fragments of broken fans—withered petals of the gayety of a lost century. Again, there were ponderous quaint portmanteaus, which had rumbled their last on wheels before the French Revolution; a chest, with a service in it of metal plates and dishes, for the use of some prince when he halted at wayside inns—objects which whispered of coaches with blazoned panels, armed retinues, and long robber-haunted roads. Nor was the priest's boast a vain one when he spoke of old docu-

ments, and of a theater. There was in the basement a series of vaulted chambers, stacked with papers and parchments, like trusses of brown hay, which made Grenville feel as if all the past were breathing at him; and above the drawing-room was a high saloon full of silence, where a regular stage stood with all its scenery, in the same condition as when actors had last trodden it, on a certain gay festival ninety years ago.

He had little temptation at first to wander beyond the precincts, the castle and its grounds offering quite enough to amuse him; but occasional glimpses which he caught of the outer world made a fitting frame for the things with which he had grown familiar. The windows of the library commanded the square of the little town, which the second day of his visit was thronged with a many-colored fair, the whole area being tessellated with the costumes of peasants and gypsies. A day or two later he saw the same open space perambulated by a procession bearing tapers, crosses, and censers, and led by chanting priests, whose vestments twinkled in the daylight: and beyond the fences of the park he gradually came to realize there were plains where buffaloes fed, and—better still than this—where sheep wandered, with shepherds playing on pastoral pipes to them.

The Princess, who had lived so long in her adopted country that anything strange about it had by this time worn away, began to feel, when her guest described his experiences to her, that she saw it with fresh eyes again, and her interest in it was revived by his. The nights were so warm that, leaving the lighted drawing-room, they sat outside on the roof of the portico after dinner, talking of the life surrounding them—talking of the rob-

bers that still haunted the country, of the powers still exercised by some of the rural magnates and of romantic stories and legends of this and of that family; and she sometimes alluded to a possession of the house of Plekonitz, which she said that Grenville ought by and by to see—a half-ruined castle on a rock, some sixteen miles away, with quarters in it for a thousand troops; and a hall, like a brick cathedral, called “the hall of the canon.” And meanwhile, from a tavern beyond the lodges would float, with a dreamy wildness, the music of a gypsy band; the moon, rising above the blossoming horse chestnuts of the park, would make in their branches a mist of milky lamplight, and out of the thickets beyond would thrill the first notes of the nightingale.

But at last came a day of rain; and he then betook himself to a region which he had as yet quite neglected—the library. The bulk of the books were French—books of the last century, and many of them were extremely curious. There were quaint guides to old-world watering places; quaint treatises on old-world household economy; and others, without number, on building, containing plans and pictures of mansions in the Faubourg St. Germain, and of châteaux in the days of their glory. In addition to these he found a collection of tall folios, which were full of superb engravings, illustrating, in the most minute way, the life of Paris and Vienna, from the street to the royal bedroom.

These the Princess had never seen before, and her pleasure in them knew no bounds. She and Grenville, before they went to bed, would spend an hour in turning them over like children. Brilliant balls, banquets, and royal card-parties, fanciful outdoor fêtes, hunting scenes,

and processions, all drawn from life with the most exact minuteness, were revealed before them on the splendid unwieldy pages. The gilded chariots seemed to rattle as they looked at them, the flowers to be sprouting in the alleys of the grandiose gardens, and they heard on the towering hedges the clink of the gardener's shears. But Grenville at last discovered something better even than this. It was a little oblong volume in tattered and dirty calf, which he chanced to unearth, and opened it with very faint curiosity. But when he opened it he found it the identical thing which he had wished for secretly, without imagining it existed. It was a collection of engravings published two hundred years ago, of the castles of Hungary and Styria, showing them as they then were. The superb folios at once ceased to interest him, and his imagination gave itself entirely to these strange romantic dwellings. Some were perched on curious rocks like bird's nests, some hung with their turrets over little clustering villages, some stood in great woodlands, solitary. But all had the same peculiar air about them, distinct from anything known to Western Europe. They were all of them mansions or palaces incorporated with the feudal stronghold, not as if this last were the work of a dead antiquity, but as being obviously a part of the real life of the time. There were Italian gardens hidden behind cannon and watch towers, Italian gateways flanked by walls loopholed for musketry, and traveling carriages issuing out under the teeth of the raised portcullises.

And now came the question, where were these castles situated? And which of these, if any, could Grenville manage to visit? The Princess understood his enthusiasm, but she could give him little information. She accord-

ingly sent for an agent who managed part of the property; she submitted the book to him, and catechized him carefully as to its contents. Of many of the castles he naturally knew nothing; but a dozen or more, belonging to the adjacent region, he at once identified, and could say something about them. Of these several he knew to be complete ruins, but three or four of them—and they happened to be among the most singular—he said were standing much as the pictures showed them, and he engaged to find out how they might best be visited.

One excursion, indeed, was arranged at once, and that was to the castle of which the Princess had herself spoken. A light carriage and four were put at Grenville's disposal. Early one morning the horses stamped under the archway, the porter in his gold lace and his robes superintended the start, and past the lodges, and beneath the glittering coronet, Grenville sped away into the level limitless landscape, inhaling the smell and freshness of the half Oriental spring. He came back in the evening enchanted with what he had seen. Everything had deepened in him the odd sense of primitiveness which he had received at the windows of the railway carriage. Everything had spoken of a world that was lost to Western Europe—the peasants who lifted their shaggy caps as he passed; the tracts of forest through which the road had taken him, where gypsy bands camped in clearings, and woodmen on the borders of the shadow were cutting the raw red timber; and above all the aspect of the villages. These were the same, in every typical feature, as those drawn in the old volume of castles; while, as for the village at the foot of the castle he was bound for, the moment he came in sight of it he had recognized all the



houses. The castle itself he had found to be more than half a ruin, but in other respects it had astonished him. The sides of the rock which it occupied were encrusted with prisons and guard-rooms: he had reached the summit through a line of ascending towers, whose iron doors swung in the breezy shadow; he had found a labyrinth of great subterranean galleries; beyond a grass-grown yard that was littered with rusty cannon, he had come on a tower full of portraits and crystal goblets; and perched in the air over the nave of a lofty chapel was a banqueting hall, complete with accessories that might have walked straight out of Wardour Street—armor and arms, and worm-eaten black sideboards, and a long oak table surrounded by carved chairs.

"Well," said the Princess, at dinner, "I can tell you some good news. The agent has been here to-day with me, and he has arranged two more expeditions for you—to castles that are as large as this one—and he says not ruined at all. To see these, however, you must sleep for a couple of nights at a little town about thirty miles away: so as one or two people are almost directly coming here, you had better, perhaps, calm your impatience and wait until they are gone. Remember," she added, "there are my little great-nieces and their mother. For my sake you must stay and admire these; and then, as I told you, there also will be Count C——. He knows Hungary thoroughly, and he was for some years at Constantinople, so for every reason you ought to be here to meet him."

"Nothing," said Grenville, "could please me, or suit me, better. I have letters to answer, and many matters to think over; and, until your guests come, I shall really be glad of quiet."

## CHAPTER V.

QUIET, indeed, he welcomed for many reasons. His imagination, he found, was being touched by the life about him to a degree he had never expected. He had told Lady Ashford he felt it as good as dead; and here, a week later, it was actually turning him into a boy again. Of this he was made more conscious than ever, the following day, when he set himself to answer his letters. They had been forwarded from the Embassy at Vienna—a big formidable packet. The tone of them all, as well as the matter, was flattering; and they flushed his mind with the sense that he was really a rising man. And yet as he sat at the window of his vaulted bedroom, writing his clear answers to them, and feeling his power in doing so, the thought of his surroundings would constantly touch his nerves like a perfume—a delightful consciousness of the castle, with its ancient passages, of the Turkish spoils, the rouge pots, the velvet masks—of the primitive villages, the forests, and the great pastoral plains. All appealed to him like a wild breath of romance; and romance seemed a more attractive thing than reality. He enjoyed the sensation, but at first he was somewhat alarmed at it; and he welcomed a quiet which would allow him to examine his symptoms. He asked himself whether, after all, he were not merely a dreamer, and whether he were not already tiring of his new career. “To succeed,” he said to himself, “what

one wants is will. Is not my will once more being drugged or seduced by my imagination?" But he soon convinced himself that such an alarm was groundless. The impersonal romance which was charming him, he reflected very justly, unlike devotion to a woman, was no rival to ambition; indeed, as that night he explained at length in his diary, its tendency rather was to make his ambition keener.

"All work in the world," he wrote, "except religious work, among its motives has always ambition for one of them; and if anyone says this is not true in his own case, it merely means that his ambition is a kind of ambition he is ashamed of. Now ambition is essentially an appreciation of some prize that the world can give one: and nothing depraves ambition, and in my own case deadens it, so much as the sense, which one cannot escape in England, of how the world's prizes are being affected by the growth of the democratic spirit. It is only when the constitution of society is openly and avowedly aristocratic that ambition can be gentlemanly, or even honest. An ambitious democrat is bound to achieve his elevation by making a trade of saying he does not wish to be elevated; and then, when he does achieve it, what a ridiculous elevation it is. He is like a man chaired by a mob, and every moment in danger of being upset by it. But in this country, so far at least as a stranger sees, there are neither mobs nor democrats. This castle, were it in England, would no doubt seem rude and uncomfortable: but its towers and courtyards have here nothing to rival them: and it is just in the same way here that the spirit of aristocracy survives, not really, perhaps, with more vigor than in England, but with

nothing, so far as a stranger sees, to question it. One feels it here as one does not feel it there. It forms quietly a kind of atmosphere round one; it restores to life a lost picturesqueness and brilliance; and it makes the world a place that seems better worth succeeding in."

If these impressions were strong when he wrote them down, they were destined the following day to be strengthened still further. The Princess announced at luncheon, with a certain air of importance, that the Count and Countess were coming that afternoon. "Irma Schilizzi," she added, "has put me off till to-morrow." Then she paused. "The Count and Countess," she resumed presently, "as of course you know, are among the greatest—the very greatest—people in Vienna. It's a pity you never met them. They were in London before your time."

Grenville noticed in her manner a certain touch of nervousness. With some surprise he presently saw the cause of it.

"The Count and I," continued the Princess, "are very old friends. We always get on famously. As for her, her manners can be perfectly charming; and here she'll of course be civil. But——"

"Well," said Grenville, "but what?"

The Princess gave a little laugh. "You don't know Vienna," she said. "Well, no more do I. I never tried to do so. Shall I explain why to you? Listen to me. You see what I am—the widow of the greatest magnate in Hungary; and foreigner though I am, I can tell you that at Buda-Pesth I am as great a lady as anyone—perhaps I am even the greatest. But at Vienna I shouldn't

be so much as received in society. My mother belonged to one of the oldest families in England. Her mother was the daughter of an English duke; but my father and his father were brewers—only merchant princes and liberal statesmen. And at Vienna—I tell you I'm not exaggerating—I should be nobody—nobody—nobody. These Austrian countesses and princesses—well, there's no use talking about it. As you didn't know this one in London, see how she treats *you*. I thought till this morning that he would be here without her: but she's on her way to some place, so she makes this house a convenience."

One of these observations slightly annoyed Grenville. The Countess might have a contempt for brewers and brewers' children, but he saw no reason why he should be classed along with them. He not only, however, was careful to hide this feeling, but he resolved that, no matter how the Countess treated him, he would pretend that she had kept him at a distance, and so share the lot of his hostess. He saw the subject was a sore one with her, though she had herself started it, so he said abruptly, by way of turning the conversation:

"And who is Irma Schilizzi, who you said is coming to-morrow?"

"My niece—my niece," said the Princess, a little impatiently. "I suppose I am stupid, and didn't tell you her name. There is a case in point. She lives in Vienna sometimes. Her husband has business there. He is one of a firm of engineers. He is very rich; he has done some great works for the Emperor; and so his name is perfectly well known. As for getting into Viennese society, my niece would as soon think of trying to

get to the moon. But to her the Countess will be not only civil but charming. She considers the distance between them to be so immense and acknowledged, that she will be almost as nice to her as she might be to a favorite maid. These people—I tell you you'll be able to see it for yourself—can be charming to those whom they acknowledge their equals, and also to those who acknowledge themselves their inferiors; but to others, their insolence is something that an Englishwoman could hardly believe in. It's all the greater, because they hardly seem to be aware of it. Not that I care," she added, with true feminine veracity. "Perhaps she'll amuse you. She's a handsome woman, but very stupid."

This formidable lady and her husband arrived about five o'clock. Entering the drawing-room Grenville found them at tea; and after all he had heard he watched them with some interest. The Count, a handsome man, who looked about sixty-five, with his frank expression and carefully trimmed beard, had all the air of a high-bred fashionable Englishman. The Countess was a slim woman, who had many remains of beauty, and evidently a Parisian maid, and she was prattling to the Princess with all the lightness of a girl, in a quick alternation of German, French, and English. The Count, as Grenville had expected, greeted him with great cordiality, but he was completely surprised at meeting the same reception from her. She turned toward him with a bright twinkle of welcome, which seemed to come at once from her eyes, her lips, and her jewelry. "Mr. Grenville," she said, in the prettiest foreign accent, "I didn't know we were going to find you here. We were so sorry, the Count and I, not to have met you at Vienna. Dear

Princess, let Mr. Grenville sit by me. Perhaps you'll allow him just to move the tea table."

Grenville experienced two conflicting emotions. He would hardly have been human if he had not felt somewhat flattered at being distinguished thus by a lady whom he had been told he would find so *difficile*. But another emotion, which he was far more keenly conscious of, was annoyance for the sake of the Princess, who he felt, in spite of her kindness, would be mortified for several reasons at this falsification of her prophecies. He honestly wished that the Countess would begin to be rude to him; he did as little as possible to meet her friendly advances; and he carefully kept from looking toward the Princess, for fear she should think he was asking her to remark his conquest. By and by, however, the Countess suddenly said to him, "And Mr. Grenville, how beautiful they are, those poems of yours! Your Ambassador lent them to me. I think there is real passion in them."

Grenville's eyes, in modesty, wandered away from the speaker, and they fell by accident full on those of the Princess. He was puzzled by seeing in them no signs of annoyance, but a knowing smile which said to him, "Isn't it as I told you?" What she could mean by this he was quite unable to conjecture: but the moment the Count and Countess were taken to see their bedrooms, she explained it by saying to him, with a little friendly malice, "Don't you notice how she takes you for a man of letters, and patronizes you?"

"Well," said Grenville, with a really generous effort, "perhaps she does. I confess I did feel patronized."

Never was lie told with a more successful charity. The Princess laughed, delighted, and rubbed her hands together. "Ah," she said, "didn't I tell you so? That's Vienna all over."

Grenville was satisfied that he had wiped out the mischief; but, as fate would have it, at dinner it all began again. The conversation turned at first on various royal marriages, and then on the general gossip of half the courts of Europe. Nothing in the world could have suited the Princess better. Of Rome and St. Petersburg she knew far more than the Countess, and despite her opinion of the Austrian *haute noblesse*, she had the *Almanach de Gotha* well at her fingers' ends. Then presently, when the Countess, who loved jewelry like a child, said to her, "Oh, *mon Dieu*, what a beautiful brooch that is of yours!" she achieved a genuine triumph in being able to answer thus: "The Queen of England gave it me. She was fond of me for the sake of my grandmother."

"Yes," said the Count to his wife, anxious to make things pleasant, "the Princess was always a great favorite with the Queen."

"I know England so little," said the Countess, turning to Grenville. "I only married my husband during his last year in London. I stayed one autumn, however, at several of your beautiful châteaux. Compared with you English we poor people are barbarous."

"On the contrary," said Grenville, "I hear your châteaux are splendid. Your country life has always particularly interested me."

The Princess, who thought that Grenville still felt patronized, was anxious now to speak up for his dignity



"Mr. Grenville," she interposed, "has a beautiful old château of his own."

"Ah," said the Countess, laughing gayly, "to be sure he has. We have been there, we have seen it. We were staying with Lord Solway, and he drove us through the enchanting park. You don't live there? No? I was told it was let to some rich *bourgeois*. But we went in. We saw all of your old pictures, and one—I recognized one—of a lady I know well. Your aunt, I suppose she is, Countess Juliet Grenville, the *Chanoinesse*. So you see we know all about you; and your Ambassador said at Vienna you will be such a great man. You ought to be great," she went on, with an almost coquettish friendliness. "I am not laughing—no. It is written in your eyes. I am a physiognomist."

Grenville felt that the Princess was taking in every word: and later in the evening he hoped she was out of hearing, when the Count, who treated him with equally marked distinction, offered to give him this and that introduction to obnoxious grandees, the despisers of brewers' daughters, in case he should really wish to see country life in Austria. The Princess, however, had managed to hear everything; but she was far too genial and dignified to feel any real annoyance at it: and she only indulged in the solace, which an angel could hardly have grudged her, of trying to make it appear that everything had happened as she predicted.

"Did you notice?" she said. "They treat you as one of themselves. You see the reason. They happen to know your pedigree—I daresay better than you know it yourself. Isn't it just as I told you? Only I never thought it would have come out so soon. Well, the

Countess is satisfied that your blood is blue. She never forgets that mine has malt and hops in it."

"My dear Princess," said Grenville, "I'm sure you are wrong there. This lady seems to treat you as her intimate friend."

"Stuff!" said the Princess, laughing, as she said good-night to him. "You don't understand women. Civility with a fine lady is often the grammar of impertinence."

The whole of these incidents somewhat jarred upon Grenville. He was sorry for his hostess, whose life, for the next few days would, he saw, be ruffled by some old sense of indignity; but he was annoyed at having had her grievance confided to himself. It seemed like a breath of common and incongruous prose, disenchanting the air of his lonely and princely castle. In this mood of mind the society of the Count and Countess gave him a pleasure by contrast, which he could not help feeling, but for which he reproached himself as if it savored of treachery. There was a soothing calm about them, especially in their social judgments, which said that for them a social grievance would be impossible. They also showed not only perfect taste, but the kindness that comes to people for whom acrimony could never be a necessity. In the Count, too, he noticed a certain chivalrous discrimination, when he mentioned the Princess's niece—a mere *bourgeois*, the wife of an engineer.

"We met her here," he said, "last year—a pretty, refined woman."

"Yes," said the Countess carelessly; "her mother, I think, was noble."

"You would quite get the impression," the Count continued to Grenville, "that she had made a *mésalliance* in

marrying this Schilizzi—a Levantine. He's rich—he must be; and has a great villa at Hampstead. Some day in London you'll be making a fashionable man of him."

In these last words was a dryness that spoke volumes. Soon afterward the Countess, with a pleasant smile, happened to say of the Princess, "So clever, so nice, so good she is." These words spoke their volumes also. Grenville now detected the note of instinctive patronage, and was certainly not displeased that he was not himself its victim. The sense that he was not—the sense that these two fastidious aristocrats, while patronizing others, saw in himself an equal, gave him in his own eyes a certain increased importance, the very nature of which he would hardly have understood at home, or which at home he would certainly have thought ridiculous. He was indeed conscious of something ridiculous in it even here. Still it was a stimulant; it lifted him up and braced him; and the fame and brilliant position that promised to be the reward of his exertions seemed not only more necessary to him, but more nearly in his grasp than ever.

But presently an incident happened which disturbed his mood, and made him despise himself for indulging in it. Mrs. Schilizzi arrived—a clear-eyed, graceful blonde, somewhat timid in manners, but perfectly well-bred. Grenville was by instinct always attentive to women, even to those who appealed to nothing beyond his kindness. And here was a woman to whom, under other circumstances, he would certainly have found it pleasant to pay some common attention. Indeed he did attend to her, as it was; he did his duty conscientiously. He seated himself by her on her arrival and talked to her

about her journey. But all the while he felt that the Count and Countess had lent their Viennese eyes to him; and these eyes persisted in seeing in her not a pleasant acquaintance, merely the *bourgeois's* wife, who was beyond the pale of intimacy. Nor were matters mended when afterward she shyly spoke to him about London, and he found that her ideas were confined to Hampstead and Bayswater. He knew when, that same evening, he reflected on how he had behaved to her—he knew that externally he had shown her no want of politeness: but to talk to her had been an effort, and he despised himself for the feeling that made it so. And yet the feeling perversely refused to vanish; and indeed next morning it inclined rather to confirm itself. He took a walk in the park with the Count and Countess. They tried to give him every information he asked for; they renewed their offers of various useful introductions—especially one to Count T——, a great territorial noble, who lived in the neighborhood of the castles he was about to visit; and noticing their charm of manner, their kindness, and their perfect taste, and realizing how their pride was like a dagger which they kept in a velvet sheath, and could never draw, unless someone ventured to attack them, he said to himself that a pride which he shared with them could not after all be so very absurd or vulgar.

In the afternoon they departed. The Princess, when she had seen the last of them, asked Grenville to join with her in her relief at being rid of the lady; and calling the children and her niece to her, began to laugh and talk with them, as if a weight had been lifted from her mind suddenly. He, however, was conscious of a certain blankness. He had a feeling as if his natural allies had

deserted him, and had left him in a position more or less false among strangers. But his spirits revived when the Princess, with great good humor, returned after dinner to the subject of his promised expeditions, and arranged that he should start as soon as he felt inclined. "Irma," she said, "goes in a day or two. She is waiting to hear from her doctor about a little watering place between this and Buda-Pesth, to which she wishes to take her children. They are both delicate: neither London nor this place suits them. Had your ways only lain in the same direction you might have waited and taken charge of her."

He was by no means sorry to hear that this was impossible. He had lost his sense of happy ease in the castle, and he felt that a little wandering all by himself would sober him. He hated to feel himself an unsympathizing critic of his hostess, and a supercilious critic of her niece, who was prettier than he first had thought she was. Her eyes would have pleased Greuze; her dress would have pleased Worth; her complexion would have pleased anybody. But he could not help measuring her by the standard given him by the Countess; the chief impression she conveyed to him was that she was not *grande dame*; and the signs of refinement and thought in her by which he was sometimes struck, merely surprised, and did nothing toward attracting him.

The very next morning, for instance, when he was turning over some books in the library, she happened to enter without at first seeing him; and with obvious curiosity began to inspect the shelves. Grenville's only thought was, "What on earth can she want here?" The moment she saw him she started and blushed crimson.

"I'm so sorry," she said. "I didn't mean to disturb you."

She certainly did disturb him; but, seeing that she turned to go, the whole of his good nature was up in arms to reassure her.

"Can I," he said kindly, "help you to look for anything? There's nothing here, I'm afraid, that's very new or amusing."

"I like old books," she faltered, "though I daresay I don't understand them. What I wanted to look at was the castles you showed the Princess."

Grenville produced the volume, and turned over the leaves with her. She seemed unnecessarily grateful for his politeness, and was profuse in her exclamations of interest. The exclamations annoyed him, and he asked her, by way of checking them, if connected as she was with the country, she had seen any of these places herself.

"No," she said. "My mother was Hungarian; but this house and Vienna are nearly all I know of Europe. I have never seen anything. Please don't let me disturb you."

This annoyed him also—this constant tone of apology. He remained with her dutifully till they had come to the last picture; and then with a feeling of relief he escaped to his own bedroom.

"What a difference," he reflected, "between a woman like that and the Countess. The Countess is fifty if she is a day; and never at her best could have been as pretty as Mrs. Schilizzi. But how much more important in mere point of attraction is a certain kind of bearing than beauty of face or form! The Countess has the power of

beauty; the other has merely the face of it. The Countess and women like her—their great quality is this: it is self-confidence without self-consciousness, not perhaps with regard to individuals, but with regard to life. This has nothing to do with what we should call knowledge of the world on their part. A girl may have it, just as much as a woman. It is a confidence not in what she has seen, but in the point of view she has seen it from. Take, for instance, Lady Evelyn Standish. She is as innocent of any doubt as to her own point of view, as she is innocent of any knowledge of evil. Between a woman like this and a woman not like this, there is the same difference in the way they deal with life that there is between the touch of different players on the piano.

As he was piecing these thoughts together, he looked out on the park, and there he saw the woman whom he had thus been obliquely criticising. She was with her children under the flickering boughs of the horsechestnut trees. Her dress was creamy brown, with a hat trimmed to match it; theirs was red, making them look like anemones. She was dancing to amuse them with some graceful subdued movement. The sunlight fell on them through the young, expanding leaves; and the group of figures arrested him by its mere charm as a picture. Then its meaning came to his heart and touched him. Feeling seemed to be glancing there under the green shadow. "That," he said to himself, as he stood watching it, "that, I admit, is a perfect piece of nature. Could this woman be as natural with the world as she is with her children, no doubt I should think her charming. Even as it is," he continued men-

tally, "she is quite pretty enough to suggest one satisfactory thought to me: and that is the thought of how completely the time is past when a woman's prettiness could ever really disturb me."

Turning from the window he took out of a small writing-case the photograph of a girl, with a well-poised head, and eyes that looked with a sort of composed eagerness. "You, dear Evelyn," he murmured, "if ever your love is mine, will never disturb *me*: and I—God help me—will never disturb *you*."

That evening he wrote in his diary as follows: "My expedition has been definitely arranged. I start the day after to-morrow. The change has come just when it was most wanted. The grievances of the Princess against Viennese society, and the talk and the smart dresses of the young grass-widow from Hampstead, whose husband, it seems, is at Symrna, making a railway, were beginning to interfere with the charm which this place had for me—to interfere with it before I had realized half of it.

"My pride, I suppose, ought to have been flattered by Mrs. Schilizzi, who did me the honor to say that she had read and admired my poems. I did my best to look all that the occasion demanded; and I was in such good humor at the prospect of going to-morrow, that I have no doubt I succeeded. In that prospect I have only one thing to complain of. Count T——, to whom an introduction was offered me, and with whom I might have stayed, is away. I shall, therefore, have to go to an inn, in a village or small town called Lichtenbourg. There is a mineral spring in the place, frequented by a few invalids: so the inn, which my servant knows, and which



**calls** itself the Hotel Imperiale, will no doubt be something more than a mere tavern. But I know these obscure hotels, and at best it will be most uncomfortable. The nearest railway station, too, is nine miles away, and we will have to jolt there in some battered vehicle of the country."

## CHAPTER VI.

So far as the railway was concerned, the journey was not formidable. The station at which he was to alight was but forty miles away; and the train being an Hungarian express, took but three hours in reaching it. The weather was now as warm as an English midsummer. Flowers dotted the plains like sparks dropped from a rocket, and there was a sigh, a stir, and a life in the sunlit air as if the lips of the present were expecting those of the future. The groups of peasants and farmers at the intermediate stations seemed to Grenville like happy scenes out of an opera; and some of the simple vehicles which he saw waiting outside did not augur ill for his coming nine miles drive. At his own station, however, a great surprise awaited him. Besides himself there alighted a distinguished looking lady and gentleman, with a couple of footmen, a maid, a pile of dressing-bags, and a poodle; and when Fritz escorted him out through the small booking office, instead of having to look for some varnished cart on springs, he saw before him not only two smart omnibuses, with the name of Lichtenbourg blazoned in gold letters on them, but a collection of landaus far better appointed than most that are to be had on hire at places like Nice or Brighton. A moment later his servant had engaged one of them, and he was presently driving off with a rapid but easy motion. These little touches of modern fashionable civilization

gave to his dreamy mood a flavor of mundane piquancy, increasing by contrast the charm of the country he now was entering. It was totally different from that which surrounded the castle of the Princess. First came a mile or so of rich emerald meadows, dotted with quiet cattle; and an old quadrangular manor house, with a tower at each corner, was standing and drowsing knee-deep in the grass. Grenville saw over a hedge its quaint gardens and greenhouses. Then came a line of hills covered with pine and beech; and the road was presently deep in a sylvan valley. The scenery grew by turns wilder and still more smiling. Wooded gorges alternated with pasture and peeping villages and village greens, each of which had its crucifix, with *prie-dieus* and seats before it, for open air devotion. Crucifixes also were curiously frequent along the roads; and nailed to trees from which they could watch the travelers, pictures of saints looked through the leaves like birds. By and by came a region of blooming orchards; then a gorge with a torrent brawling at the bottom; and up in the sky, rising above the foliage, a high roofed castle, whose tower had a copper dome like a soap bubble. "That is Count T——'s," said Fritz, from his seat by the coachman; and Grenville knew he was nearing his destination. He passed a water mill; then came a cottage with an arbor; and on the cottage was painted the words "Wilhelms-Quelle." Similar cottages with the names of other springs on them, succeeded each other at intervals of about a furlong; and judging of his future from the aspect of these primitive establishments, he began to augur for himself but scant luxury for the night. Presently, however, on the side of a swelling hill, he saw ex-

tended the line of a long white building, on which, as he approached it, were legible the words "Hotel de Milan." He saw as he passed it a great glazed restaurant, with waiters, and white tables; and beyond was a garden with pavilions in it. "Our hotel *excellens*," said Fritz, turning round to him, "is in the town. It is much better than this one. The house, the villa in front of us, is the villa of the King of Moldavia."

"Good Heavens," thought Grenville, I never expected this!" On either side of him now were alleys of horsechestnuts, clipped as carefully as a box-hedge in a garden. The road, or the street, as one might call it, dipped over the brow of the hill, and a colony of other villas, with verandas and gay shutters, on various acclivities, were gleaming among clouds of leafage. Presently there came a row of diminutive shops; and opposite them, before the portico of a large building, the carriage drew up. This was the Hotel Imperiale. There was little life stirring; but the establishment was as well appointed as if it had been at Baden-Baden, in the old days of the gambling. It was now nearly seven o'clock; and while Grenville was washing and brushing himself, Fritz ordered dinner for him, and came to guide him to the restaurant. Here was a fresh surprise. The restaurant adjoined the hotel, but was not part of it. It formed one side of a garden, of which the hotel formed another; and the tables were arranged some in a long saloon, some in a veranda, which had the garden under it. In the middle of the garden was a kiosk ready for a band, and on the two other sides of the square were ball rooms, reading rooms, and a theater. The whole place had an air of Baden-Baden in miniature.

But it was a Baden-Baden that was for the present sleeping. The important Frenchman who superintended the restaurant informed Grenville that the season was only just begun—indeed that that day was reckoned the first day of it: and he handed his excellency the opening number of the Visitors' List—a little flimsy sheet with not more than fifty names in it. Lamps were sparkling in the kiosk; dainty tables were laid; Grenville's dinner was really of the most delicate kind: but besides his own, only two tables were occupied; in the garden below was only a loitering group or two; and such voices and the movement of such feet as there were, were oddly audible in the prevalent dreamlike silence.

After dinner he rambled through the little town, with its hilly roadways and masses of mysterious foliage. The fantastic villas gleamed. There was gilding on the gates of some of them. The whole place was kept in faultless neatness. And yet there was no gas; but the clipt horsechestnut alleys were lit with lamps that shone like midsummer glow worms. There were seats in green recesses and wandering paths among verdure. Everything—even the very gravel raked so carefully—teemed with suggestions of unknown fastidious life. Hardly a soul was stirring. It was a silence that seemed to be waiting for the life that would soon come to it—for the floating sounds of bands, for whispers, for women's dresses. It seemed to be waiting for life, like a woman waiting for love. It seemed to be saying, "Here is my heart, fill it."

This subtle impression stole into Grenville's mind, and when he woke next morning it was there like a bunch of violets. He was to start early on one of his expeditions;

and by half-past eight Fritz had a carriage ready for him. Away he drove into the fresh youth of the day, past opened venetian shutters, and bedding hung over window sills. His road for some way was that he had traversed yesterday. The apple blossoms and the gorges again met his eyes. But in his heart and his nerves there was now a new restlessness. All life seemed to be imploring for something, and his own life added its own vague petition. Memories of bygone love affairs, and the longings they had failed to satisfy, began to come down to him in the resinous breaths of the forest, where the dew was still on the leaves of the wild strawberries. He seemed to see the colors of women's dresses, and the flash of women's eyes to whom he could give no name. Even a peasant kneeling at the shrine of a wayside saint quickened in him some sense of vague imaginative expectancy.

It was a day of dreams. The castle—the object of his expedition—was something beyond his wildest hopes. Like the one he had seen already, it covered an isolated rock; only large as that one was, this was three times its size, and was almost ghastly in the completeness of its preservation, like a corpse that is undecayed. The gate tower, the guardroom, the batteries, the long battlemented walls, the fields and orchards inclosed in their vast cincture, the quaint pavilions looking like miniature forts, and lastly the dwelling itself, hugging the edge of a precipice, and reached by three drawbridges—a pile with a hundred windows, crooked arcaded courts, rooms stacked with armor, a suite of Italian halls, and a fossil flower garden with a fountain, that masked the magazines for powder—all this, though deserted excepting by

one custodian, had hardly a stone or tile on a roof missing. This overpowering shell of the past, with its strange enchanted silence, seemed to Grenville to be waiting for what had gone, just as Lichtenbourg with its lamps seemed to be waiting for what was coming.

The last of these two impressions became even more vivid that evening. He found when he dined that there were several parties in the restaurant; and afterward the band in the kiosk gave its first performance for the season. There were some listeners under the trees; and a faint whisper of feet; and now and then through the shadow moved the gleam of some rustling toilette. Early next morning he found his way to the springs—very different from the antiquated cottages by the road. They were near together, all of them in a winding garden, which filled with its walks and grass the bottom of a wooded valley. Again the band was playing: some visitors were drinking the waters, the lady and the poodle among them, whom he had seen at the railway station. Some gay parasols made bright patches of color; and here and there, brilliant from banks of leafage, there shone forth masses of blossoming lilac. Grenville wandered about, scanning the people curiously. He was interested to notice in certain of them an air of suppressed fashion; and although presumably they had come most of them for their health, yet they and the scene together were somehow suggestive of dissipation. He had intended that day to have gone on his second expedition; but the life about him stirred his fancy so pleasantly that he determined instead to remain quiet and observe it.

But in an hour or so the gardens were empty and the

whole town looked deserted: and though a craving for the present, which was mixing itself with his dreams of the past, kept him the whole morning in a state of anxious excitement, a blank reaction came with the afternoon. The silence and the solitude gradually lay like a weight on him. He regretted that he had not got his expedition over; and he longed to be back with the Princess, hearing her pleasant voice again.

Nor were matters mended when he learnt, the last thing at night, that this waste of a day had necessitated the waste of another. The castle he was to see was inhabited: to-morrow it would be closed to visitors, so he would have to wait on, and go there the day after. The intervening time seemed to stretch before him like a desert; and he sank to sleep in a mood of impatient wonder as to how he should get through it. For an hour next morning the scene at the wells amused him. Then again came dullness. In desperation he started on a walk into the country. The scenery was beautiful, but he was not in a mood to enjoy it. On his return to his hotel he thought half the day had been disposed of; but he found, on consulting his watch, that it was only half-past eleven. The gardens were empty, except for two nursery maids. The theater looked as if it would never again be open. The reading room and the conversation room were closed and the blinds down. In the hotel it was evident that one or two rooms were occupied; but the windows of all the rest were sealed hermetically. The town was asleep; hardly a villa was tenanted. He began to loathe the sight of everything—of the tables under the trees, where no one drank coffee, of the green seats on which no one sat, and the paths where



no one wandered. He walked so incessantly that at last he became footsore; and everything which but two days ago was so strange and suggestive began to oppress him with a sort of hateful familiarity.

At last his prospects brightened. The dinner hour drew near. He was not hungry; but to eat would at all events be an occupation. In a somewhat happier mood he was strolling in front of the restaurant, looking occasionally at the waiters as they bustled and arranged the tables. The warm daylight was dying in a dim flush, and here and there within doors lamps were being lighted. Nothing was wanting to the scene but the life that it seemed to call for. Suddenly, on turning round he saw moving among the trees the graceful figure of a woman, which at once startled him into interest. Her pale pink dress and black hat, with feathers in it, spoke of the daintiest fashion of Mayfair or of Paris; and there was something in her air and movements, though he could only see her back, which filled him at once with a pleasant sense of curiosity. He took a turn round the kiosk, so as to meet her and see her face. The maneuver was successful. He encountered her. He started—it was Mrs. Schilizzi!

“Good Heavens!” he exclaimed; “and who would have thought to see you here!” He smiled as he spoke, and his manner was more cordial and friendly than it ever had been while they were staying together at the castle. She, on the contrary, looked at him a little coldly, and remained at a distance from him, as if wishing to move on.

“I’m so sorry we troubled you,” she said. “It was my aunt who insisted on it. Myself I knew quite

well that you were too busy to attend to such matters."

"What on earth do you mean?" exclaimed Grenville, with an accent of bewilderment, which the most suspicious of listeners could not have doubted was genuine. Mrs. Schilizzi did not doubt it, certainly. The slight cloud on her face melted with a naïve quickness. "Tell me!" she exclaimed with a smile. "Didn't you get our telegram?"

"Never," he said. "What telegram?"

"Why," she replied, "just after you left, I heard from my doctor about the place I thought of going to. He said there was scarlatina there; so that put it out of the question; and he strongly recommended that I should bring my children here. My aunt telegraphed at once to you, in my name, begging you to engage some rooms for us; but getting no answer, I came over myself. I thought, too, that before deciding, I might as well see for myself how I liked the looks of things."

At this moment Fritz appeared from the hotel, and as soon as he caught sight of Grenville, hurried up to him with an envelope.

"I shouldn't wonder," said Grenville, "if this were your telegram at last. It is! Well, the mystery explains itself. My name was written *Glanvil*, and the address was 'Hotel de Milan.'"

"Ah," said Mrs. Schilizzi, "that was the agent's fault. He put the address. He thought he knew all about it. This, I find, is the right hotel. I shall settle about our rooms to-morrow; go back in the afternoon, and at once make my arrangements."

"It's a pity," said Grenville civilly, "that you can't

wait a day. In that case we might have gone back together. I propose to-morrow to see one of those old castles."

"How interesting!" she exclaimed, with such an air of sincerity that Grenville doubted for a moment whether he would not ask her to come with him. The idea, however, was interrupted by Fritz, who announced that his dinner was ready; and as Mrs. Schilizzi had ordered hers in her sitting-room, he took himself off, expressing a hope at parting that he might meet her an hour or so later, when the band began its performance. She nodded a pleased assent, and by and by, in the lamplight, he returned to the same spot, and waited for her under the leafy shadows.

"Upon my word, we have smartness here with a vengeance!" he said to himself presently, as a figure in a long pale cloak, that was braided with gold and trimmed with swan's down, came down the steps of the hotel, accompanied by a maid, who was peering about her inquiringly. He at once advanced, and with a smile of happy relief, Mrs. Schilizzi said, "I shouldn't have known where to look for you. One man in the dusk is so much like another."

"You," said Grenville, "at all events, can't say that about women."

She glanced at him timidly, as they seated themselves in view of the kiosk. "Do you mean," she asked, "that my cloak is too smart for this place?"

"Not at all," said Grenville. As he said it he was hardly sincere; but a moment later he felt that he had become so, when he glanced at her face above the swan's down that seemed like a little flower—a flower childishly

conscious of the prettiness of its own petals. It was not a face that excited in him any great interest, but the element of childishness which he now began to discover in her, had, in spite of its freshness, a certain something of pathos, and made him feel kindly toward her, as he might have done toward a child. He began to describe to her the wonders of the castle he had visited. She listened intently, taking in every word, and he finally did the thing he had already contemplated. He invited her to come with him to the other castle to-morrow.

"Could I?" she exclaimed. "I wonder if I could manage to wait?" The pleasure of the prospect for her was doubled by the complete surprise. She played with her doubts for a few moments, and then assented, with a soft laugh of delight.

When they parted, which they did before very long, he took another solitary stroll in the lamp-lit horsechestnut alleys; and in a mood of lazy conjecture he began to think her over. One of the things she had said considerably raised his opinion of her. He had happened casually to allude to Countess C——; and Mrs. Schilizzi, with a decision and a discrimination that struck him, had remarked on the charm of her appearance, and the still greater charm of her manner; adding, "Not that she cares to be nice to me; but she's so self-possessed and natural, there's an artistic pleasure in watching her." "Your aunt's artistic sense," he had answered, "is not quite so developed." Into Mrs. Schilizzi's face had come an expression of humor, as if a piece of gravel had rippled a quiet pool: and she had said, "My aunt thinks that the Countess snubs her." The words were commonplace enough; but her tone and expression in saying

them seemed to Grenville as he called her image back to him, to show the keenest and yet the gentlest sense of the whole facts in question. And yet that this should be so was a puzzle, rather than a pleasure, to him. He tried to figure to himself Mrs. Schilizzi in London; and the only place at home into which he could possibly fit her was not one that seemed consistent with much social discrimination. He thought of the pretty faces, and the dresses just as pretty, that on any June morning might be seen thronging the Row. He thought of how many of those faces had no name or meaning, in the only world which he or his friends knew. And then he thought of others, whose names were perhaps known to him, and who at least suggested a definite social type. But it was a type that to him was more distasteful than any. It was that of the women who are fashionable in everything except in fact—the adored of youthful guardsmen—the heroines of the river and of Hurlingham: and in his own mind he classed Mrs. Schilizzi as one of these. He pictured her drawing-room, with men much at their ease in it, lounging on divans and sofas, and playing impertinently with her knick-knacks, while she lounged also, resenting nothing that was said to her. This did not make him forgetful of what he thought were her merits; nor did it, indeed, make him think of her less good-naturedly: but it did prevent him feeling the pleasure he might have felt in the prospect of having to-morrow so pretty an appreciative a companion.

## CHAPTER VII.

By a quarter of ten the following morning a smart looking victoria stood at the hotel door; and Grenville was smoking a cigarette with the air of a man waiting. The carriage, in fact, had been there for something like twenty minutes, and his face had begun to wear a slight shade of annoyance, though it was the annoyance of resignation rather than that of impatience. At last a voice was heard within on the staircase—the voice of a lady calling out to her maid. “Julie,” it was saying, “this is really too bad of you. You first give me my wrong dress, and now these gloves are both for my left hand. Take them away, and bring me some others instantly.” There was a certain note of temper in all this which, for the moment, slightly jarred upon Grenville. The impression, however, was instantly done away with, when the same voice was heard, with completely restored good-humor and also with a softness in it, full of a quick repentance, saying “Oh, Julie, thank you—these are just what I wanted.” A pale brown dress, the color of which Grenville recognized, gleamed through the shadow of the hall; and Mrs. Schilizzi issued.

Her lips, and her eyes also, were full of apologies for her lateness; and the flush in her cheeks showed the sincerity of her emotion. “*I am* so sorry,” she repeated as soon as they were settled in the carriage. “Waiting is a

thing I never could bear myself." She turned her eyes, and the brown feathers of her hat, to him, her chin hiding itself in the sable about her collar—turned them, with an air that might have seemed to be asking for admiration, if it had not, with such naïve frankness, asked for pardon instead. Grenville's pleasant answer disarmed her timidity. "My maid," she went on, "was so stupid. She gave me the wrong dress. I only saw it was the wrong one when it was on: and then I had to change it. This suits me to-day so much better than the other."

"What!" said Grenville; "do your frocks change their colors, like a chameleon?"

"No," she replied. "But I change: and this is the color that suits me best when I am happy." Here she broke into a little musical laugh, which died in her eyes into a look of returning timidity, as she added, "Mr. Grenville, you will think I am very silly?"

Grenville thought she was, but was too civil to say so: and yet at the same time he had some undefined impression that the silliness, such as it was, was a thing on the surface only; and he felt, as they drove off among the villas and the horsechestnuts, a pleasure in the sense of sharing with her the soft air of the morning, and all the day's prospects which it seemed to breathe in their faces. This impression deepened as from time to time he glanced at her, and he saw how fresh was the pleasure that she herself was experiencing. He had thought that her face was like a flower yesterday evening. It was now like a flower with the dew on it, tremulous with life and brightness. At first, however, he was annoyed by the frequency of the exclamations with which she called

attention to this thing or that thing—the shining roof of a villa, a hedge, or even a column of smoke: but he gradually realized that, common as these objects were, there was something distinctive in the aspect of each as she noticed it—some effect of light, some tender contrast of color, which, when it was pointed out to him, he at once appreciated, but which, had he been by himself, would have altogether escaped him.

“Oh,” she exclaimed at last, drawing a long breath, “look at that! Look! Do let us stop the carriage.”

The carriage was stopped; and then, with an amused perplexity, he turned round to her, asking her: “Well, what is it?”

She pointed to an orchard of cherry blossom. He had himself already remarked it—a feature of the landscape, a part of its passing pageant. But to her it had a beauty in itself, peculiar to that moment. “Do you see the petals?” she said. “They palpitate like the wings of butterflies.”

There was in her voice an almost religious tone, like that of a child repeating a hymn with feeling. She saw he understood her, and gave him a glance of gratitude; and then her gravity, like a small wave on the sand, sparkled and broke into a laugh of unconscious happiness.

“I,” said Grenville, as the carriage moved on again, “enjoy nature in some ways; but I never saw anyone so sensitive to its beauty as you. I have learnt much from you during the last ten minutes. The spring is showing me beauties that never before were visible.”

She turned to him, blushing crimson, with an expression of startled pain. “How can you say so?” she faltered. “You are laughing at me. I could not



teach anything to anybody—and to you least of all people!”

“Indeed,” said Grenville kindly, “you do me a great wrong. I was not laughing. I meant what I said, literally.”

“Of course,” she went on only partially reassured, “you understand nature—a great poet like you. You can describe it—you can express its meaning. I can only feel it, and I am foolish to show my feelings. But a minute ago I was so happy that I forgot myself.”

“It is you,” said Grenville, “who are laughing at me now. Me a great poet! I published one small volume, which only my friends read: and they have now forgotten it. It was a piece of myself, perhaps; but it was not a piece of literature.”

“Yes,” she said, “that was its great charm. Most books are books. Your book was a person. I was not one of your friends; but I read it, and have never forgotten it. I bought a copy; and mother told me I was so extravagant. All you said about nature—it moved me even more than Keats does. What you said about other things I didn’t understand then.”

Grenville now began to notice in her one characteristic which interested him. Her mood seemed to change like an English sky in April. At one moment she would be hidden behind some cloud of shyness; the next she would brighten, and show, with a happy unconscious confidence, herself and her slightest thoughts as the sky shows its blueness.

“I’ll tell you,” he said, “what I think about your appreciation of nature. You realize how beautiful it is in itself. What I attend to most is, the human thoughts

it stirs in me. Look about you at the valley we now are entering. Look at these wayside crosses! And there—nailed against that pine tree, do you see the picture of St. Joseph—so uncouth and so simple? And those peasants, too, in the wood, tugging at their unfortunate cart horse—to me they seem the serfs of some phantom baron. The whole place is full of the air of the Middle Ages, and all my imagination is troubled by the smell of the pine trees.”

She looked about her, taking in every detail, a new excitement changing her whole expression. “Ah!” she exclaimed, “you are right. This is just like a fairy tale. See that little gray building; it must, I am sure, be a hermitage. And where does the baron live? And do you think there are robbers? Nothing seems real except you, and the carriage, and my frock. Do go on; I want you to tell me more.”

“Well,” he replied, entering readily into her mood, “the farther we drive the deeper we are getting into fairyland, and the place we shall reach at last is a genuine fairy castle. It is not a ruin; it is lived in; it is full of all sorts of splendors, that are hidden away under its moss-grown roofs and pinnacles. It belongs to a mysterious Count, who spent all his youth in the East, and returned to Europe laden with gold and jewels. As to this I am serious: I am not romancing. The people at the hotel told me his whole history. He is a Polish count, and also an Egyptian Pasha. The castle is very old. There is a picture of it in the book I showed you; but what it is like now I know no better than you.”

She leaned back silently, smiling at her own thoughts: then suddenly she looked up at him, and said, laughing

into his eyes, "And tell me—do tell me—will there be ghosts, and drawbridges—and a chapel, and dungeons, and winding stairs and balconies? You, who have seen so much, can hardly tell how excited I am!"

She was so completely natural, and there was in her spirits something not only so buoyant but, at the same time, so confiding, that Grenville was charmed by it into a curious sense of intimacy with her. He felt that they were playfellows sharing the same holidays.

"Do," she went on presently, "do promise me that there will be balconies, with rusty iron scrollwork, beautifully wrought. I am sure there will be; and from one of them a princess used to look into the distance, waiting perhaps for something that never came." The laugh had died out of her voice, as she uttered these last words. They fell from her lips with a slow, meditative softness. "Do you," she said, "understand how my thoughts wander?"

"Yes," he answered, "and mine are wandering with them."

For a time they hardly spoke. They had left the more beaten road, and were ascending a rugged track, which climbed up a wooded hillside, and from which nothing but wood was visible. The smells of bark and of eaves became pungent about them. Some wild-eyed charcoal burners scrambled down a bank, with baskets on their bowed backs, and stared after the carriage. Presently came the cottage of a forester, with some wolves' heads nailed against it. These Grenville pointed out to his companion, who laid her hand on his arm, with an impulse of imaginative terror.

"Well," he said to her, "and what do you think now?"

Does not the mystery of the forest seem to be closing round us?"

For an hour the journey continued to be of this character.


At last, however, after a number of ups and downs, they emerged on some sloping grass land, with a timbered farmhouse belonging to it, which bore the date of 1490, and on one of whose gable ends was a quaint Madonna fading. A little farther on came hedges that showed signs of clipping. A shed stood by the road, with some carts and plows under its shelter; and a moment later, without any warning, the carriage had stopped before the gateway of a discolored turreted pile, the extent and the situation of which was made doubtful by the trees surrounding it. A porter unbarred the doors, and bowing obsequiously to the visitors, admitted them to a court, narrow, but of great length, entirely surrounded by buildings, and having flower beds and lilac bushes in the middle. Their career of sightseeing was apparently all marked out for them. They were taken up a flight of fantastic steps, which brought them to an open arcade, running all the length of the court; and down this they were led to a cluster of towers at the end of it. A series of loopholes pierced in the outer wall showed them as they passed that the castle was on the shoulder of a hill, and gardens and tree tops were visible far below them. A small door opened, and they were treading on an Italian pavement: they were startled by a glitter of profuse and barbarous gilding, by purple portières, and fanciful Moorish looking-glasses. These decorations belonged to a sort of vestibule; and out of this, by various crooked passages, and through more portières, they

passed to a nest of bedrooms. The situation of all of them was romantic and picturesque in the extreme. They occupied strange towers and angles of the ancient building, and looked down over the green depths below: but their furniture and their decorations were of the strangest kind imaginable. The beds, fantastic in shape, were draped in cloth of gold, the dressing-tables were garnished with pictures of Oriental dancing girls, the ormolu frames of which glittered with enamel and turquoise; silver stars and crescents studded the ceilings, and crimson rugs glowed on the polished floors. Presently they found themselves in the Count's private apartments. His bed had legs of ivory. The quilt was almost covered by an embroidered coronet; a painted coronet covered the bottom of his bath; above his wash-hand stand were twenty bottles of essences, and his jug and basin—both enormous—were of silver. Then, by means of many tortuous staircases, they reached what originally had been the banqueting hall of the castle. It was long and low, with a roof of ponderous vaulting, but the Count had seen fit to relieve this with florid gilding. There was a Mosaic pavement, as slippery and as shining as ice, and the furniture looked like the stock of a bric-à-brac dealer in Florence. From this they passed into a long suite of rooms—a billiard-room, hung with jeweled Oriental weapons, a drawing-room, where everything—even the legs of the tables—was ultramarine, a grand saloon surrounded by Gobelin tapestry, a dining-room, an antechamber, and last of all a chapel, where the walls were dim with monumental tablets and kneeling knights carved in discolored marble, and where a golden lamp in the silence was burning before the altar.

---

This apparently ended the general routine of sight-seeing, but Fritz, industrious as ever on behalf of his master's dignity, had meanwhile been impressing the greatness of it on a fat, supercilious looking seneschal; and the visitors were accordingly informed that if they would like to use it for their luncheon there was a room with a fine view, which would be very much at their service. The offer was accepted. The room was in one of the towers, and, owing to some lucky circumstance, it had escaped scot-free from the irrepressible taste of the Count. The walls were whitewashed, the floor bare; the cabinets, chairs, and tables were of dark worm-eaten walnut; and in a corner was an old spinet.

"Here," exclaimed Grenville, "is the castle in its natural state. The ghosts of the past, I am sure, must make this their refuge." He went to the window, which he opened. "Mrs. Schilizzi," he said, "come here, let me beg of you, and see your dream realized." She went toward him, and they stepped out on a balcony—a balcony whose railings were of beautiful old wrought iron. To right and left of them were irregular bulging towers, and steeped tiled roofs spiked with fantastic ornaments. Below them a wood of beech trees descended the precipitous hillside, and from the bottom of this an expanse of country spread itself, reaching away to hills on the far horizon. Mrs. Schilizzi said nothing, but leaned on the rusty iron, and seemed lost in the prospect. He watched her dainty figure against the background of weather-beaten wall. Her look and attitude were grave and more absorbed than he had ever seen them hitherto, and though her expression was not what would be necessarily called religious, she made him think of St. Monica and



the balcony of the house at Ostia. "I suppose," he said at last, "you are fulfilling your own scripture. You seem to be waiting for the something that never comes."

She turned her eyes to him. They seemed to be full of dreams, as a pool when it ceases to sparkle becomes full of reflections. Then, as if to perplex him, the sparkle came suddenly back again, and she said, "Do you mean that I seem to be waiting for our luncheon?"

"For that," said Grenville, "you need, at any rate, wait no longer. See! our table is spread. Was anything ever so charming?"

Mrs. Schilizzi, as she moved to take her seat, opened the old spinet, and struck a jangling chord on the keys. "There!" she exclaimed, "now I have done with dreaming. Mr. Grenville, all this is making me quite beside myself. Perhaps I shall be better after I have eaten something."

One of the servants brought in a bowl of lilacs, which he placed on the table, by way of a simple ornament. She gave an exclamation of pleasure at sight of the delicate color. "A thing like that," she said, "always puts me in spirits."

As they eat their cold provisions they began to talk over the castle, and Grenville enlarged on the extreme interest of it as a building, and the grotesque misfortune that had befallen it through the taste of its present owner.

"You shouldn't," she said, "talk about that. You are spoiling everything. I suppose it's vulgar, if you come to take it to pieces; but here in this forest, I think one's imagination alters it; and it's splendid for the time, if one only believes it's splendid."

"Yes," said Grenville, "I think you are right there. Ridiculous and vulgar as all these splendors are, they are, at the same time, so audacious, so barbarous, and so insolent, that they load one's mind with some odd sense of romance. A place like this would in England be quite impossible."

"I feel," she said, "that I hardly know where I am—where, or in what century. I don't believe that I ever thought much about such things before; but what you used to say to my aunt—you didn't say much to me—somehow seemed to open a new door in my mind."

Grenville was again conscious of an anxiety to avoid conversation that was personal: so he said, "But surely, so far as regards the *where*, you must know this country as well as you know England."

"You underestimate," she said, "my capacity for knowing little. Haven't I, Mr. Grenville, told you so much already? My aunt's castle—I know the four walls of that. I know my husband's flat in Vienna, the Prater, and the opera house. I know nothing besides, but Countess D——'s villa in Hungary."

"Who," asked Grenville, "is Countess D——?"

"My cousin," she said. "Mother was a Hungarian. She was very poor, but of very good family—you must not think me boastful for saying that; only except Alma D—— her relations are all dead: and Alma's villa was new and might have been anywhere; and outside its grounds all that I saw was fields. As to Vienna," she went on after a pause, "of course a person like myself—the wife of a Greek engineer—is nobody and sees nothing. I am there either a prisoner or a tourist. Considering that, till I married, I lived always with ladies and



gentlemen, it is a little odd sometimes to feel myself in that position—not" she added, "that in London, or, rather, at Hampstead, I am anybody. I am very provincial at the best of times; or, perhaps, if I had only the courage, I ought to call myself by the terrible word suburban."

Grenville for various reasons was struck and interested by her manner. There was in it not only a certain plaintive prettiness, but a humor and dignity, when she passed these criticisms on herself, which was, in his judgment, quite enough to refute them.

"I never," he said, "saw anyone who was less provincial than you."

"Well," she replied, "I won't argue the point. If you ever see more of me I shall have little need to do so."

When their luncheon was over, and they were once more in the carriage, with a naïve abruptness she recurred to the same subject. As they drove away she turned to look at the castle, and said, with a slight sigh, "Perhaps one reason why I feel so *borne* is not that I have seen so few things, but that I long to see many. And yet, after all, inexperience has its advantages. A person who had not seen so little as I have, I am sure could have never enjoyed a day so much."

"You cannot," said Grenville, "have enjoyed it more than I have: though I have enjoyed it for a reason that could never be shared by you."

"What reason?" she asked.

"The reason is," he replied, "that I have had you as a companion."

The moment he had said the words he repented of them. The compliment was obvious, and had slipped

from him, out of some forgotten habit; but the effect it had upon her touched his heart like a knife. She gave him first a look of surprise and pleasure, which shamed him by its trust in his sincerity; then came what seemed reaction of doubt, and a pained resentment. The jolting of the carriage for a time made further speaking impossible. She had turned away from him; but for many minutes afterward he saw, as often as he glanced at her, that a deep flush in her cheek kept coming and going as if her heart were in some hidden tumult. A sudden sense came over him of the nature of the life beside him—of how delicate it was, how easily pleased and wounded; and he said to himself, with an almost disproportionate compunction, which was, however, wholly without vanity, "idiot that I am—what little care I take of her

"I that would not let e'en the winds of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly."

By and by, in a totally changed tone, full of sympathy, but without a suspicion of compliment, he took up the conversation as if nothing had interrupted it. "I can hardly admit," he said, "that the pleasure you have taken in our expedition, and which, as I told you just now, has so added to mine, is due to the mere accident of your not having traveled much. Travel more, as no doubt you will some day; and each new climate you visit will call forth new flowers in your mind. Different countries to me are like different musical instruments, touching into vitality different sets of sympathies, and giving to life the allurements of a different face. I wonder if you will catch my meaning. The Scottish

Highlands, purple with autumn air—the mountains, whose sides are creased with rocky shadows, or which lift themselves through the mist on each other's shoulders into the clouds, the eyes of the moorland children on the bare hillside at evening, all seem to speak to me some one secret of the universe. This land of castles and pine woods, and foresters with plumes and hunting horns, says something wholly different. It makes life speak through a different musical instrument. And the very thought of a Mediterranean sky fills my mind with visions of statued gardens, of ceilings frescoed with all the gods of Olympus, and of purple evenings seen through bowers of Banksia roses. Did you ever," he added, "read the story of Pyramus, who died at the foot of the mulberry tree, and whose blood gave its color to the fruit? All these various civilizations in the same way color the flowers of the mind—ancient Rome or the Renaissance, or the age of chivalry, or the age of the Highland chieftains."

He was not looking at her as he spoke, but he instinctively knew that she was attending to him. He was, therefore, surprised when, at this point, she hastily murmured "Don't," and turned her head away from him.

"Why?" he said, "what is it? Tell me—have I been boring you?"

She looked him in the face, and her eyes were tremulous with tears. "You only," she said, "give me longings for what I shall never know."

When he spoke again, it was in a mere commonplace tone. "You shouldn't," he said, "take so gloomy a view of your future. You should light it up with happier expectations, and with as many of these as possible.

Expectations are like lamps, which it costs nothing to keep burning, and events can only blow out one at a time."

After this, there was an end of seriousness and sentiment, and their talk became nothing but the ripple of meeting sympathies, till once again they saw the villas of Lichtenbourg, and agreed that they would dine in the restaurant, keeping each other company.

Between their return and dinner, she had completed her arrangements about her rooms; and the prettiness of the salon she had secured, and the comfort of the rooms for her children, filled her with spirits and pleasure, as if they were some new toy. She talked about them to Grenville with an innocent and happy volubility which secured his interest by taking his interest for granted, and then from her rooms she passed on to her children, telling him of their lessons, their health, their tastes, their characters—moving from subject to subject lightly and tenderly as a butterfly. Grenville listened, absorbed, wondering why he did so. It was hardly so much words that he was listening to, as a kind of moral music; and when dinner was over he looked back at it with wonder, reflecting that the conversation, which had made it pass so quickly, had hardly strayed beyond the limits of a stranger's nursery.

Again, in the warm evening, they sat under the lamp-lit trees, listening to the cadence of the band. By this time she was silent. Her eyes and her lips were pensive. "Listen," she murmured, as a gay waltz being ended, the music turned into something that might have been a love song or a hymn. Touched by the sound, Grenville said to her softly, "How fond you are of your children.

Whether you see much of the world or little, you at all events have them."

"Yes," she said, and her words kept time to the music, as if she trusted it half to hide and half to express her emotion, "they are all I have to live for."

Presently, as if feeling that she had betrayed more than she meant to, she turned to him with a smile that was at once bright and languid, and thanking him for the pleasure he had that day been the means of giving her, said she was tired, and must now be going to rest. "You have been so kind," she added. "I shall always think of you as one of the kindest people I have known."

"And I," he answered, "I shall always think of you——" He paused.

"Yes," she said, "yes. Tell me how you will think of me?"

She put the question with an undisguised curiosity; but before he had attempted to answer, she had risen, and with her eyes on the ground, said, "If you think of me at all, I will tell you how to do so. Think of me as ~~someone~~ waiting for something that never comes."

## CHAPTER VIII.

THE following morning they returned together to the Princess. But everything now was changed, without any apparent reason. Their intimacy of the preceding day, which had blossomed so quickly, had given place to a certain kind of reserve. It was with him that the change originated; but she had been affected by it instantly. When they talked during the journey, it was merely about the most commonplace matters; and for long periods they were both completely silent, she self-wounded by thoughts of what now seemed to her to be folly, and blushing at every stab which she gave to her own nerves; he conscious of a cold mood at work in him, which shut her out from any but his most superficial sympathies.

On reaching the castle, he found a fresh packet of letters. He had not time before dinner to do more than glance at two of them; but the glance, hasty at it was, seemed to confirm him in his present mood; and he muttered as he was brushing his hair, "What an idiot I was yesterday!" The same influence was at work in him during dinner, though it showed itself in a different way. He troubled himself to make conversation; and he made it with some success. He described Lichtenbourg; he described the castles he had visited; he laughed at the Pasha's furniture, at his bath, and at his bottles of essences; and he said to the Princess, "The whole time

I was there, I was in my own mind trying to construct a picture of him. I felt sure he had waxed mustaches, hair dyed and curly, and round his eyes the wrinkles of seventy years' misconduct."

The Princess was delighted, and thought he had never been so pleasant before. As for Mrs. Schilizzi, she looked at him half bewildered, wondering if this could be really her late sympathetic companion. There was nothing in what he said that was really hard or ill-natured; but through it all ran a vein of contemptuous flippancy which made him seem to her quite a different person: and when a little later his tone became more grave, and he discussed with the Princess the characters of certain English statesmen, and mentioned that from two of them he had heard that very evening, she felt him to have retreated farther from her than ever. Till they separated for the night she hardly again addressed him: but then, as she turned to go, a part of what was in her mind expressed itself.

"I ought," she said, "to thank you again for that delightful expedition of yesterday: but don't"—and her lips as well as her voice trembled—"don't laugh at me for all the nonsense I talked to you. How could I have done so? I can hardly bear to think of it."

"Laugh at you!" he exclaimed. "My dear Mrs. Schilizzi, if your conversation were the kind of thing to be laughed at, I only wish I had friends who would make me laugh oftener."

His voice was full of a genial and hearty frankness which certainly showed her that her request was quite unnecessary; but it wounded her more than it would have done had it been less prompt in its assurance,

because it showed so little comprehension of the doubts it dispelled so carelessly. When she reached her room she sank into a chair before the looking-glass, and sat abstractedly staring at her own reflection. At last she was startled at seeing tears gathering in her eyes. She rose abruptly, and hid her face in her pillow. "Never, never, never," she murmured, sobbing, "never again will I show my thoughts to anyone. The moment I do so, something or other nips them, and they lie on my mind like so many withered flowers." The image of Grenville had no part in her trouble, except as a far-off figure which pointed to her own loneliness: and by and by, when she sank into a weary sleep, there was still a line of pain on her upturned childish forehead.

Grenville, meanwhile, was in a very different mood. He was seated at his writing-table, with all the air of a man who has work before him of an anxious and urgent kind: and a certain letter was absorbing his whole attention. It came from his man of business; and its purport was not agreeable. It told him that an old aunt of his, his nearest living relative, who depended for the decencies, if not for the necessities of her life, on a few hundreds a year which he allowed her out of his limited income, had reduced herself, by a foolish speculation, to temporary but extreme distress. She had incurred liabilities the nature of which she had not properly understood; and for the time being she was left practically penniless. "Unwilling," the writer continued, "to apply for help to you, who have done and who do so much for her, she hoped by selling a little plate, and by practicing various economies, to be able to get through the crisis, without your hearing of its occurrence: but you will see



from the details, which I enter on a separate sheet, that this was quite impossible. When I last saw her—she has consulted me several times—I found that she had discharged all but one of her servants; it was a chilly day, and there was hardly any fire in her grate, and I noticed that her hands were trembling, not with agitation only, but with cold. To relieve her effectually, about two hundred and fifty pounds will be required; and reluctant as I am to appeal to you in the matter, under the circumstances I feel I am bound to do so—though I do so without her knowledge. For her immediate wants I have advanced her a small sum myself."

Grenville laid the letter down with a frown of amazed perplexity. "Two hundred and fifty pounds," he said to himself. "I much doubt if I have as much at my banker's." There came to his lips a slight contemptuous smile. "Here am I," he reflected, "thinking myself a great man; flattered by ambassadors, bowed down to by officials, received by hotel keepers as some wonderful *grand seigneur*, and comporting myself as if nothing and nobody were good enough for me: and yet if I write a check for a paltry sum like this, I should be for the time a beggar. I should hardly have money enough to carry me back to England. All the fine fortunes I have fancied myself already possessed of are no more help to me now than the sight of land to a swimmer, who will probably—and this may be my own case—drown before he reaches it. Anyhow let me know the worst."

He turned to his banker's book; and half flinching as he did so, began to examine his account

"It is worse than I thought," he said. "I have barely a hundred left. Up to three hundred, no doubt I

could overdraw; but supposing I pay this money, how shall I stand myself?" For the least selfish of men this would have been a very natural question; but even before he had answered it, he considered one point as settled—and that was his payment of the whole sum required. The economies that would be necessary on his own part he now proceeded to calculate; and he soon decided, although with extreme reluctance, that he would have to cut short his travels, and at once return to London.

Quickly as his decision was taken, it was taken with a pang of disappointment, which he bore in the best way possible by refusing to think how keen it was. With a nervous haste he passed to his other letters, as if he counted on finding in them some help to distraction. He began with the two which he had glanced at before dinner: and if he sought distraction, they were unexpectedly successful in bringing it to him. One was from no less a person than the Prime Minister himself; and contained a compliment which he had never expected from that quarter—a request for his opinion on certain important matters, which would form the subject of an impending debate in Parliament. The other was from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, which was even more encouraging. "I cannot," it said, "too highly praise you for the extreme lucidity of your last communication—especially those parts of it in which you work out your suggestions, with regard to the claims of the Turkish and Egyptian bondholders. I believe that with you, and with you alone will be the credit of showing us our way out of an extremely troublesome difficulty. I may tell you that Lord Solway—by the by, is he a relation of

yours?—who is an authority of considerable weight on most of our Eastern questions, was asking me about you only two nights ago: and I said to him just what I have said to yourself now. His answer was, 'Then, by G——, he has done more for the Government than if he had won a dozen contested seats.' "

Grenville now turned to an envelope which he had not yet opened, and which in one corner bore the signature "Solway." Its contents were as follows:

"MY DEAR MR. GRENVILLE: If only your grandfather, whom I remember well, had not been a person of such nice social taste, and had appreciated less keenly the privilege of consorting with the First Gentleman in Europe, you would yourself be in a position to aspire, without arrogance, to the hand of any young lady, no matter how distinguished, provided that her father was not a king or a nobody. But as matters stand, there is hardly a mother in England—I refer to mothers of daughters in any way suitable to yourself—who would not object to you in the character of a son-in-law quite as openly as she would value you in the character of a friend. You are, indeed, an excellent example of the way, so much admired by the pious, in which Providence visits on the children the sins and extravagances of the fathers. As you are not, however, a nonconformist minister, you will, I trust, not be shocked at me when I tell you of my own conviction, that half our duty to Providence consists in dishing it, and, if we cannot get rid of errors, at least getting rid of their consequences. I propose, therefore, if you will allow me, to do this in your own case. I know by this time quite enough of what there is in you to be satisfied that you have before you a brilliant and serviceable career; and I will impute your success to you before you have actually achieved it. Why should you waste any longer time in waiting? If you can manage to do so, you may propose to my niece

to-morrow. I don't advise you to do so, for it would have to be done by telegraph; but at all events use whatever expedition you can: and I will tell you how, without the telegraph, you can be quite as expeditious as is necessary. My sister and her two daughters are just starting for Italy. They are going to Milan, Padua, Vicenza, and at last to Venice. I will send you to-morrow an exact calendar of their movements; and then, my advice is, join them. And now, by way of saying something specially pleasant at parting, I may as well tell you this. Evelyn's cousin—young Oliver Jackson—a good-looking boy, but to my mind an insufferable prig, has excited her admiration by the degree he has taken at Oxford, and—people think I'm blind, but I see as much as the best of them—has been lending her books, which she takes and reads with gratitude. There's nothing in this thus far. It's all very silly and natural; but none the less you must remember, as Byron said from experience, 'There is a tide in the affairs of women.' And if you don't know that by this time, I needn't attempt to teach it to you."

As Grenville read this, something that was not trouble exactly, but excitement mixed with anxiety, not only took possession of his face, but also expressed itself in his movements. He rose from his seat, paced the room restlessly, smoked some cigarettes in order to calm his nerves, and finally, with an impatient rapidity, undressed himself and went to bed.

Early next morning he sent a note to the Princess, to tell her he was needed in England, and must start that afternoon for Vienna. She was sincerely annoyed at this, and when she met him at luncheon, she was armed with a piece of news which made her regret stronger. She put into his hand a picture she had just received from the agent—a picture of a castle on the summit of a wooded

rock. "Could you only have stayed," she said, "you might easily have seen that. It is said to be by far the most curious place in the country." The moment he looked at it, it struck him as being familiar; and he presently recognized it as the castle which he had seen with such wonder from the railway. He eyed the picture wistfully, and a strong wish came over him not to quit these regions of yet unexhausted dreams. He passed it to Mrs. Schilizzi, who took it with a distant smile. When she examined it, she softly exclaimed, "How curious!" That was her only comment, but she kept it beside her plate, and throughout the meal her eyes were continually turning to it.

As for Grenville, whatever his regrets were, they did not interfere with the decision and promptness of his movements. There was a train for Vienna at five in the afternoon, going by the direct route, and arriving early in the morning; and by it he had arranged to take his departure. The station for this was seven or eight miles distant; so his hours with his friends were already almost numbered. "I suppose," he said to the Princess, "if I am not wanted at home, you will let me come back and finish my explorations?"

"Do," she said, brightening up at the idea. "You must remember I feel you are treating me very badly. However, I'll come to the door with you, and give you a parting kick."

Mrs. Schilizzi came too, with her pair of fair-eyed children, and watched with a quiet face the carriage disappear from the archway.

The mellowed sunshine rendered the drive delightful; and Grenville was in a mood not unfit to enjoy it. But

he could not help reflecting for the first mile or so, on another drive he had taken only two days ago, when he had had a companion by his side and had seemed to be drifting into fairyland. But he soon shook off this not very violent sentiment and turned his thoughts on his own situations and prospects. His immediate financial difficulties he viewed with diminished anxiety; and though a journey to Italy would be a new strain on his resources, he felt confident he should manage to meet it somehow. But one thought, which had been forced on him last night, had become more startling and more persistent than ever; and this was the thought of the extreme weakness and insecurity of his own position in the world, as it actually was at present. Another such claim as that which he was now about to meet would reduce him to penury. A fall of five shillings in the rent of each of his acres, would reduce him to ruin yet more complete and hopeless. Nothing but his wits would be left him between himself and starvation. Many people, he reflected, considered him as a social light. He seemed to himself but a small flickering taper, which the slightest breath might at any moment extinguish.

He allowed his mind to dwell upon, and even exaggerate, facts like these, in order to add to the value of the release from them that was being now made so easy for him; and without intentionally constructing any picture of his future, details of it unbidden thrust themselves in upon his consciousness. He saw his name in half the papers of Europe. In various capitals, and at Vienna especially, he saw himself the object of peculiar social consideration. In London his lodgings, and his one man servant, gave place to a large and decorous house and

household. He saw a star in his coat, and a phantom ribbon across his breast. From time to time also he saw at his side a wife. Now her happy eyes were making a light in his solitude; now he and she were being announced at some brilliant party. And yet all these images, somehow to his own surprise, pleasing as they were, did but excite him moderately.

"I wonder," he thought, as he found himself alone in the railway carriage, "if from everything in life that we desire, the best part of its charm takes flight as we approach it, or becomes invisible, like a rainbow. I wonder if a political career will prove to be as unrewarding as poetry, as thought, or that life of waking dream, from which even now I find it hard to tear myself. No," he said to himself, "it can hardly be as unrewarding as those. I am only at this moment a little out of conceit with it, because I am annoyed at this sudden disturbance of my arrangements. The best of good things should not be so brusquely thrust on one."

Thus reflecting, he unpacked some refreshments he had taken with him, and trusted that after his meal he should find himself in healthier spirits. He also produced some photographs, which, as he ate his sandwiches, he kept regarding with a grave and meditative attention. One was a portrait of a girl—the same which, a few days since, he had turned to and apostrophized in his bedroom at the Princess's castle; most of the others were views of a park and an old house. The park was evidently beautiful, although even in the photographs a broken bridge and a half-roofless boat house betrayed poverty and neglect. The house too, to the eyes of Grenville, its owner, told the same story. Certain marks

on the roof, certain iron ties visible on the walls, meant for him that it was fast falling to pieces, that the present tenants would soon find it uninhabitable; while years of his present income would not suffice to repair it. But his eyes also saw in what indeed would have been seen by anybody—as perfect a specimen as the heart or head could desire of an early Jacobean manor house. There it stood, with its lines of mullioned windows, with its twisted pillars and chimney-stacks, with its domed turrets and its vanes, facing the present with a forlorn, pathetic dignity. But dignity was far from being the only suggestion it conveyed to him. It brought back to him his own early days, and the growing embarrassments of his family. He remembered the straitened life that was masked by those stately walls—the few servants, the wilderness of unused rooms, the meager fare, the one horse in the stables. He remembered his discovering and his boyish inability to believe it that his people used in the country to be talked of as “These poor Grenvilles.” He remembered how the wife of a stockbroker who had intrigued herself into London society and had taken a place in the neighborhood with some of the best shooting in England, had brought to a country ball an omnibus load of lords and ladies, and on the strength of her diamonds and her company had presumed to be condescending to his mother. Memory after memory of the same kind came back to him, each with the sting in it of some humiliating circumstance. Then from the views of his own house, he turned to one of another. This was a plain structure, with a center and two wings, all whitewash and windows, except for an entrance portico. It was bald and hideous, and of no exceptional size; but



even the photograph showed that it was kept in perfect order; and its hideousness, as every detail of it proclaimed, was at least made respectable by having lasted a hundred years. "And so," thought Grenville, "that is to be my wife's dowry, given her with the special purpose of saving her husband's fortunes, and calling life back to those old walls that are dying. It will be quite sufficient, if only we take our time; and I can solace my pride with this reflection certainly—that if the two properties are united, I shall not only have saved my own, but have given to my wife something that is worth saving."

He replaced the pictures in the case from which he had taken them; and leaning back, he began, with a gathering frown, to see certain facts facing him which were not quite satisfactory. These had reference to his position with regard to the lady whom he had, in his thoughts about the future, been so confidently regarding as his wife. He felt that now, suddenly and for the first time, he realized all that depended on her actually and immediately becoming so; and an event which he had assumed as certain, when looked on as indefinitely distant, began to seem painfully doubtful when abruptly brought so close to him. He set himself to consider what grounds he had for his confidence. They were not so slight as might be perhaps supposed. A man's experience of women may be of two kinds, of which, in proportion as they each become more extensive, the one blunts the perceptions, while the other makes them more delicate. Grenville's experience had been considerable, and it had been of the latter kind. When he met Lady Evelyn Standish he had divined almost instantly a num-

ber of minute things which, as a woman, distinctly marked her character. She was not a woman by whom the majority of men would be attracted, or any man for mere purposes of amusement; nor would men in general, as men, have much attraction for her. He saw all this in her eyes, almost as soon as he looked at them. Frank and friendly as they were, they would never expand or soften, except under the influence of a feeling which, though she might not understand it, sprang from the very depths of her life, and would not be excited readily. His instinct taught him thus much; but it did not teach him one thing, which before very long his surprised observation did; and this was that a feeling of precisely the kind in question had, if signs meant anything, been excited in her by himself. What made him confident that his observation did not deceive him, was no vanity on his part, but his complete belief in her genuineness: and in thinking of what had happened, he was touched rather than flattered. He had, as he confessed in his diary, soon begun to experience a strong inclination to develop and return her feeling: but until he had explained himself to her guardian he had simply kept this in check; and after the explanation his part had become a delicate one. Unauthorized as yet to make to her any distinct advances, fearful of trifling with her affection, and equally fearful of chilling it, he had endeavored to maintain with her a kind of balanced relationship, which might either be warmed into love or allowed to fade into friendship. The virtual request indeed which his conduct had to convey, and to convey in such a way that she should feel rather than know its meaning, was simply this, if put into vulgar language—"Give me the refusal

of you till I see if I can make you an offer." Everything, however, in such cases, depends for its ease or difficulty on the precise characters and temperaments of the two persons concerned; and Grenville felt that the character and the temperament of Lady Evelyn made a situation almost simple, which many women would have made impossible. He believed her inclination for himself to be quite sufficiently deep to obviate, for a time, at all events, any danger of a rival; and yet to be so placid that, should such a fate be in store for it, it would die of a gradual decline, without serious pain. He had had, therefore, up to the present juncture, very good if not very apparent reasons for trusting that as soon as he could ask her, she would be his for the trouble of asking; though it must be admitted that his trust owed part of its tranquillity to the fact that passion was here hardly strong enough to amuse itself with inflicting on him its customary doubts as to its object. But now, though passion had nothing to do with the change, his tranquillity began to be disturbed, and to give place to anxiety. The more he thought on the subject as the train went rumbling on, the more did this anxiety grow on him; and it filled him at last with a fever of impatient longing to be face to face with the lady without a day's unnecessary delay, and to be taking steps to dispose of his doubts forever.

Morning was gray on the dewy pavements of Vienna as he drove to the Hotel Imperial. Could he have done so, he would have gone at once to the Embassy, to see if Lord Selway's promised letter had arrived. Exhaustion, however, gave him enough philosophy to submit to the comforts of sleep and a spring mattress; and before he

was up the expected letter was brought to him. It was short, and much to the point. "My sister and her daughters," said Lord Solway, "leave for Paris to-night; and will arrive at Vicenza—you will be good enough to pay attention to dates—three days from now. They will remain there for the inside of a week, as they are going to try to get for me some chimney-pieces and doors in a certain dismantled palace. I saw them two years ago, but the price asked was exorbitant, and I had no time to bargain. My sister is going to attempt it for me; and I told her this—that I had asked you, as I knew you were coming that way, to join her if possible, and help her in her negotiations. This should reach you in time to give you one day's grace for preparations; but if you are to catch them, you must be off the morning after. I inclose you a photograph of young Oliver Jackson, with his spectacles in one hand, and Aristotle's *Ethics* in the other. If you like the look of him, you may perhaps meet him at Venice. He will not be at Vicenza."

No news in certain respects, except perhaps this last item, could have been more welcome to Grenville: but then came the thought of the poor old helpless relative to whose assistance he felt bound to repair. Pictures of her distress had been continually haunting his mind, and had confirmed him in his opinion that he must go to London instantly. And now it happened that if he should do so, his own opportunity would be lost. Suddenly he saw a way, and a simple way, out of the difficulty. Springing out of bed, he wrote a note to his bankers, to tell them that he might have presently to overdraw his account, which, as on a former occasion they doubtless would let him do. He then wrote a

check for a hundred pounds, and inclosed it to his man of business, for his aunt's immediate relief, promising if possible to be in London the following week, and in any case to provide such further sums as might be necessary.

With Lord Solway's letter another had arrived from the Embassy—a line written by the Ambassadors, begging him to come to luncheon. His own plans being as far as possible settled, he longed for distraction, and accepted the invitation gladly. It seemed that Vienna still must be full of English, for he found his hostess surrounded by a party of English acquaintances. His various greetings over he realized that all about him questions and scraps of information were passing each other like pellets, most of them having reference to people and things at home—to the newest airs and the newest tiara of somebody, to somebody's last ball, and the people who were not invited, and to somebody's new wealth and accession to royal favor. According to superior persons all such conversation is contemptible; Grenville, however, was by no means of this opinion. He knew that rarer qualities are required for good gossip than for most of the earnest discussions by which superior persons improve themselves; and that which he heard now was as sparkling as gossip could be. But familiar as the sound of it was to him, and keenly as he would once have appreciated it, it seemed to him now like a sound heard in a dream. There was an unreality and a flatness in it he could not at all account for. He did, indeed, by an effort, laugh and talk as usual; but nothing roused in him any real interest, till he heard of the latest romance, and the latest scandal of Vienna; and this was the infatuation of the married King of Moldavia for a

young unmarried girl—the new beauty of the season, who had shocked society by the audacity with which she had encouraged him, and she proved to be none other than Miss Juanita Markham. Among the company were two of the most amusing women in London, both of them amusing by their wit, and one by her absurdity also. But he only wondered now how he could ever have been entertained by either. For a moment he thought better of them, when they began to talk to him about Hungary; but he presently found this topic less inspiring than any, because it made him long to be back again in the scenes he had just quitted.

Returning to his hotel, discontented he knew not why, he learnt from Fritz, who had been devoting himself to a study of timetables, that the journey to Vicenza would occupy thirty hours, and that if he wished to arrive on the day he had specified, the best thing he could do was to start by the express that evening. He hailed the intelligence with delight. He felt that were he only moving—moving to meet the event on which his future depended, and the woman who he hoped would share it, his discontent would vanish, and the colors of life grow bright again. He found that experience hardly confirmed his anticipations. All night and all the following day, he felt himself hourly getting nearer to the arbitress of his fate. He was pleased with the sense that he was not wasting a moment; and that no doubt was good so far as it went; but he felt that the occasion ought to have caused more stir in him, and he became depressed and puzzled by finding that he was not exhilarated.

How his condition was affected by what took place at Vicenza will be best described hereafter in his own

words. It will be enough for the present to say that having remained there several days, he had left under circumstances which, to judge by his face and bearing, had not indeed elated him, or freed him from all anxiety, but had still afforded him some ground for satisfaction; and now, with no companion excepting his faithful servant, he was enjoying one pleasure at all events, which had not failed him. He was standing in the colonnade of a pale Italian villa, which stretched its frontage on the side of a low hill, and overlooked the sea-like Venetian plain. This was a villa whose name had been long familiar to him; it was one of Palladio's masterpieces, and it occurred to him on leaving Vicenza that now was his time to visit it. It was twenty miles from a town, and this enhanced its charm for him; but it had also obliged him to rise at five o'clock in the morning, in order to catch a train on a branch line, which brought him as far as a small neighboring village. The consequence was that there was still a rawness in the air, and a mist that smelt of fields and of damp vineyards, and that touched his forehead and stirred his thoughts refreshingly. He had just been through the principal range of rooms. The stuccoed exterior and the ragged grass plots in front of it had disappointed him; but the moment he entered disappointment gave place to wonder. Every foot of wall and ceiling, in the smallest ante-chamber, no less than in the largest hall, was covered with gorgeous frescoes—the work of Paul Veronese. The shining floors reflected antique Venetian furniture. Furniture and frescoes alike were perfect, and untouched by time. As Grenville stood, gazing at the distant levels, out of which here and there rose a tall, solitary

campanile, he suddenly ejaculated, "What a fool I am! I declare that never occurred to me. Fritz," he shouted. "Come here. I want to speak to you. You know in my rooms in London the picture—the Paul Veronese—that hangs usually above the sideboard. Was that left on the wall, or was it locked up in the cupboard where I keep my papers?" Fritz replied, as if owing to some negligence, that it was left on the wall: but no reproof was inflicted on him. On the contrary, his master muttered to himself with complacency, "That then settles everything. Agnew a month ago offered me five hundred pounds for it. Before a week is over he shall have lodged that at my bankers. I can settle my business without going back to London. And now—now—at least for another month, wherever my wishes draw me, I am free to follow them."



## CHAPTER IX.

THE white houses and the emerald leafage of Lichtenbourg had the glow on them of a warm, pearl-colored sunset. Only ten days had elapsed since Grenville and Mrs. Schilizzi had listened together to the music of the evening band, but in that short interval the rapid spring had been busy. It had multiplied leaf and blossom; it had made the flower beds glitter; and it had also called into existence a number of new visitors. It was not a number that by any means amounted to a crowd, but it still was sufficient to give an air of life to the place; and the walks and seats in the square on which the restaurant opened were gay with a sprinkling of company looking forward to dinner. There were at least a dozen exceedingly pretty dresses, and some officers in uniform ready to scrutinize and admire them; while the prettiest dress of all, surmounted by the prettiest hat, lit up the seat which was most open to observation, and shared it with an officer whose good fortune was widely envied. The officer himself evidently considered it enviable, and was making the most of his voice and his handsome eyes, while the eyes of his companion and the delicate color in her cheeks seemed to show that she was excited, even if not pleased, by the situation. He was talking to her alternately in French and German; and he was just in the middle of a quotation from a French song, which,

to judge from his manner, he considered extremely telling.

*Qui veut ouïr, qui veut savior  
Comment les diplomats aiment.*

"Ils aiment," he was continuing with an insinuating smile, "ils aiment si diplomatiquement," when he saw to his mortification the lady's eyes wander, and her whole expression all of a sudden change. Then she rose from the seat, and went forward abstractedly to meet a man who had suddenly stopped in front of them. This man's expression, too, as well as that of the lady, was troubled with a change, or rather with a succession of changes. Pleasure, surprise, and a something that was not pleasure, succeeded each other on his face, and remained there mixed together. As the two greeted each other, a very acute observer might have seen that their cordiality, or at least its extreme openness, was in part due to nervousness quite as much as to feeling. The officer, however, was far from being acute; and having borne neglect heroically for the better part of a minute, he rose, lit a cigar, and catching the eye of the lady, while pique shone in his own, he gallantly forced a smile, made a bow and departed. Had he waited a moment longer, he would not, perhaps, have fled so precipitately; for the manner of the lady and her friend, when the first greeting was over, grew rapidly more constrained, and almost suggested coldness.

"Do you know, Mr. Grenville, I was never so surprised in my life," the lady was saying. "I thought you must have been your ghost."

"Well," he answered, "and I really believe I might have been, for since I saw you I have been through a

kind of death. My dear Mrs. Schilizzi, you needn't look so concerned. If I told you my meaning you would say, 'Is it only that?'"

"Well," she laughed, "at all events that's a comfort; but what you said had a most tragic sound in it. I thought you were in England."

"I have managed," he said, "to settle my business without going there; and I have done now what, if possible, I always meant to do. I have come back here to see the castle whose photograph we were looking at at luncheon the day when I last saw you. It seems a year ago to me—that does, so much has happened since then."

"To me, too, it seems ages."

"Is that," he said, "because so much has happened to you too?"

"It is rather," she replied, "because nothing has."

She had not resumed her seat. They were walking together slowly. They were silent for a few moments; and then with a constrained indifference, "You have, at any rate, found," he said, "a very attentive acquaintance."

She looked up at him with a half mischievous smile. "What?" she asked, "do you mean that Austrian captain? I met him at Vienna at a public ball last year. Perhaps he is, now that you come to mention it, one of the things that has made my time pass slowly. He's handsome, and would be pleasant if he'd never open his mouth. As it is, he's been boring my very life out; and the only pleasure he's given me is the thought that he goes to-morrow."

At this news Grenville's expression softened. He

asked her where she dined. She told him in her own rooms, adding that she had letters to write, and would not reappear that evening.

"Then, perhaps," said Grenville, "I shall see you to-morrow morning. Will you let me tell you my adventures? And if we find it can be managed, perhaps you will make another expedition with me?"

"I can never," she said, "see you in the morning. Quite early, I have to see after my children; and then for some time I am busy with something of my own. In spite of the charm of your friend, the Austrian officer, I have been obliged to make an occupation for many hours of solitude."

"And what occupation is that?" he asked.

"I wonder," she said, "if I can tell you; you'll only laugh if I do. What do you think it is? I have begun writing a diary."

"I too not long since began doing the same thing. I daresay we're not singular. My diary, I find, has one merit at all events; my last few days in Italy have turned it into a book of surprises."

"Italy!" she exclaimed. "And have you been in Italy? I should like to hear about that. One of these days you will perhaps tell me—that is to say if you are not going directly. Good-by, it is late—I must be going in to my children."

As she said this they were just at the entrance of the hotel; and, without giving him time to detain her by some question which she saw was on his lips, she ran up the steps, throwing a parting smile at him, and was lost to sight in the shadow within the doorway.

Grenville was not much pleased by this abrupt ending

of the interview; and after dinner he loitered in the neighborhood of the band, hoping that after all she should find a chance of renewing it. But he looked in vain for her. She had been quite sincere in saying that the whole of that evening she meant to give to her letters; and she was, indeed, in her sitting-room with envelopes and paper before her. These, however, she presently pushed aside. "I can't write," she murmured, and drawing toward her some sheets of foolscap, she began, not to write, but to read something already written to them. This was the beginning of her diary.

What she read was as follows:

"Different people write diaries for different reasons and objects; some because they do so much else, others because they have so little else to do; some to record what they have seen, others to record what they have *been*. As for me, the last case is mine. I have done nothing and seen nothing. What have I *been* is my only history. And why am I going to write it—or try to write it? Not because I am idle, but because I am lonely, and I must speak to something—I must be myself somehow. I write for the same sort of reason that makes a boy sing, or a woman at times sob. Just as a sob relieves the heart, so will this writing relieve something else in me—something—I don't know what.

"But before I regularly begin, I want to assure myself of one thing—that I am not like a silly, sentimental schoolgirl, sighing and crying over her own fancies. I have known some girls—girls who have kept diaries, and who have used them like looking-glasses in which they made interesting faces at themselves. I am not like that; I wish to see myself as I am and have been; and

I shall try to record this, and I believe I shall be able to do so. I don't know life, but I do at least know my own life, uneventful as it must seem to every human being that has known me. Its events have been all within. I know the difference between fact and fancy; but I do not know the difference between fact and feeling. There are facts which are not feelings, but all feelings are facts, and the only facts which give the others any meaning. What would action be if it affected nobody's feelings? It might as well be something taking place in Jupiter. What would thought be if we felt nothing? Thought at its highest is but the genius—the slave of the lamp, which either guides feeling or works for it.

“Yes, but granting all this, here comes another question which will trouble me till I have made my answer to it. My life may consist of facts, even though it only consists of feelings. But are they facts worth having their history written? Will my sense of the ridiculous allow me to think they are? Yes—yet, it will, and for this reason. Every human body may not be a good model to draw, but every human body would be a good subject to dissect—how much more every human soul! Who am I? what am I? I am nobody, and less than nothing. I am not even one of my own few possibilities. I know it. And yet if human existence has any meaning at all, my life must have some meaning also. None of us is worth anything, if any one of us is not worth something.

“How philosophical I am! But I am going to be philosophical no longer. I sink, with a sudden fall, to the style of a foolish woman.

“I call this a diary. It will at first be a memoir, for I

can only get at myself by going first back to my childhood. The chief characteristic of my life I can trace in it even\* then—that I was alone. My own mind was my only real playground. I do not mean that I was an only child, or that in any marked way I isolated myself from my brothers and sisters. On the contrary, I laughed and romped and lay in the hay, and climbed trees with them. But as I dangled my legs from the boughs—I remember it still so clearly—what filled my consciousness was the world of leafy branches and the green lights which seemed, in some strange way, to hint to me of another life. When I lay among the hay and looked up at the sky, the clouds were enchanted mountains, and I wandered among their dissolving passes.

“How often have I heard people say that self-analysis is morbid! But what I am writing now is not self-analysis; I only wish it was; I wish that myself then were myself now. Oh, little girl who are lost, who never can live again, I can think about you and describe you as if you were someone else. The sole link between us is the nerve called memory—that is so often aching—and the pronoun ‘I.’

“And yet, perhaps, I am wrong. As I write on, I shall see.

“My father and mother were both people of family, though they never mixed in what is commonly called the world; but in both their characters was a certain pride, which, though we were not important enough for it to develop in us exclusiveness, did develop something which is nearly the same—seclusiveness. All my childhood was spent in an inclosed garden.

“And what sort of childhood was it? I have said

something about it already; but not all I want to say. In going on I feel a kind of diffidence. It is easy enough to say that my life was a life of loneliness, but it is not so easy to say—at least I shrink from doing so—that the heart of that loneliness was religion. But so it was. Nobody would have thought so, and clergymen would not admit that I am using the word rightly. For I do not mean that I was always going to church, or always or indeed often saying my prayers; but I was full of the longing that moves people to pray, and to do and feel many other things besides. It was a longing for something beyond and above me, and at the same time about me, but always eluding me. I saw it in the sky and in the woods, and I heard it in church when the organ sounded. As for what people commonly call religion, I had to pick up my knowledge of it pretty much for myself, for mother was born a Catholic, though she went to the English church; and my father, though a very good man, had, I believe, only one religious belief, and this was that the Church of Rome was wrong. Still I was confirmed; and when I went to my first communion, I felt—I can't express it now; how it was something the same feeling I had when first I saw the sea; or when the sky, or a flower, or anything, struck me suddenly with its depth of beauty. I remember so well how on such occasions I used sometimes to whisper to myself 'How beautiful!' and sometimes 'God be good to me!' It was a chance which of the two I whispered; I meant the same by both.

"I remember also another thing, which makes me laugh as I think of it. I used often—as most girls do—to stand looking at myself in the glass; and the beauty



of my own reflection, such as it was, moved me and troubled me, much as other beauty did. I never thought—never, so far as I can remember, ‘There’s beautiful me.’ I only thought ‘There’s a beautiful something.’ I seemed to myself, as I looked at my cheeks, to be merely like a flower given into my own keeping, and I wondered about the meaning of the petals, and was half frightened at their delicacy.

“Idiot that I am to write these trifles down! And yet am I? They are facts—hard, unvarnished facts of a life that at all events was quite free from affectations. And why should the movements of a young girl’s thoughts not be as well worth recording as the movements of sap in a vegetable?

“Anyhow I have put enough of them down now. I go on to what is broader. All these feelings of mine, for the sky, the sea, for church music, or my own complexion, were only manifestations of a constant something within me, panting to fulfill itself, and not knowing how.

“But, though it did not know, it was always trying to find out; and these attempts form really the whole history of my girlhood. Poetry, drawing, music, and then knowledge—hard, dry knowledge—I tried them all. I am not talking of what I did in the schoolroom—that counts for nothing. I am talking only of what I did by myself, and with my whole heart prompting me. And indeed everything that came home to me I had to pick up in this way, much as I did by instruction about religion, without any help or guidance. What volumes of poetry at one time I knew by heart! I found them all out for myself, and took to them only because I hoped to find in them some answer to the question ‘What is it that I

long for?' But they did not quiet me, they only made me more restless; and I felt an impulse to do—to fulfill myself by action. I tried to draw and paint, and till I saw I could do neither, for a good six months I was almost beside myself with hope. Then I think came music. Could I only have done what I attempted, the music of the spheres would have been nothing to what I should have extracted from a cottage piano. But the keys at last became like a row of tombstones, forming a cemetery in which my attempts were buried. After that I began to read books of science and philosophy, full of hard words the meaning of which I had to guess at; and it seemed to me for a considerable time that what I longed for, was to be found in the satisfaction of the intellect. What ideas I had! How my mind rode away on them as if they were wings! I used to work them out in things that I called essays, trembling with pride as I wielded the long words of Mr. Herbert Spencer. And then generally, by the time I had read a little more, I found all the profundities I had arrived at were mere truisms or commonplaces, or that else they were nonsense. But I was not discouraged—at least not for a long time. Perhaps—perhaps—I am not wholly discouraged now. If I am, I am done for.

"And all this while, what became of my religion—I mean my religion of prayers and church-going? I can't quite tell. The whole history of it is so vague. The fact is, about such matters I was not very clear to begin with; and with me, feeling, and faith, and longing, and self-prostration, were so much more than any defined beliefs, that I hardly noticed how these last were gradually sapped by the books which I read so eagerly, and

how so much of what the clergyman said came gradually to seem so foolish. But I think it was only the words that I heard in Church that lost their power over me. I put these aside as one might put aside the libretto of an opera which had some connection with the music, but only an insufficient one; while the meaning of the music itself still remained the same for me, and shook my heart as the organ shook the windows. How often contrition—I can't tell for that—came trembling into me, and the spirit of prayer bowed me, as the wind bends corn! But what came oftenest—was mere adoration—mere longing—again I can't tell for what: but all was for the same thing that I felt in nature, that I tried to capture in drawing, and to express in music, and to find in thought and study. Some people, who lose any of the definite beliefs which they learnt as children, experience much misery at the loss. I don't think I did; and the reason was what I have just stated—that the definite part of religion was to me the least important part. Indeed I remember saying to myself one day in church, when the clergyman was preaching about Joshua's moon in Ajalon, 'Perhaps I have not got a religion; but I myself *am* religion.' I meant, 'I am longing for whatever will most completely fulfill myself,' and my only articulate prayer was little more than this—'Reveal to me what I long for, and unite me completely with it.'

'If anyone besides myself were to read these confessions, I know one thing which he or she would say—'This silly girl in search of an object for her sentiment—did it never occur to her to fancy herself in love? Did she never try to solve her perplexities that way?' Yes and no—but much more no than yes. Love did enter

into my thoughts; but let me explain how. I felt myself capable of it; but I felt this in some far-off way. As for associating the idea of it with anyone I ever met, that seemed to me sacrilege. I felt it to be something which was so sacred, and which, if it came, would be so overwhelming, that it frightened me. It made me afraid of myself, as if I held within me some mystery. One or two men—indeed more than one or two, while I was still quite young, fell in love with me. Instead of being flattered or touched by this, I felt it as a kind of impertinence, and I was glad when I saw how very easily I could repulse them. They, I believe, thought I was heartless. I was not. It was because I revered my heart so much, and felt in such awe of the Unknown contained in it, that I was indignant at them for presuming to think about it. Could I only love—this is the thought that would come to me—what would the feeling be? I should die of it. Where would it carry me? I was afraid to go on thinking. I only knew this, that I never had seen anyone, and could not imagine anyone, who would justify the feeling in me, and make it not seem wicked. I remember it still—how afraid I grew of myself. I hardly dared even, at one time, to read Keats's poetry, it moved me so, without any justifying cause.

“The only emotion, the only love, that I could indulge in frankly, and that supported and did not frighten me, was love of my parents. They didn't understand me—I always felt that; but I felt that they desired my welfare; and though they could not share my thoughts, it seemed to me that they sheltered them. What was my pain then when one day quite by accident, I heard mother saying this to father—‘Irma is so pretty, that she ought to marry

well.' And then, before I could get out of hearing, I caught the name of a neighboring country squire. I had no dislike to the man—I thought nothing about him; but to hear him mentioned in this way, was like hearing a knife talked about that was to be drawn across my throat. After that, for three weeks I was miserable. Father and mother couldn't tell what had come to me, and when a letter arrived from my aunt, asking me to stay with her in Hungary, they thought the change would be good for me, and gladly let me go. It was arranged that a friend of my aunt who was going there at the same time, should look after me on the journey. I knew nothing of him, till I saw him, except his name and the fact that he was very rich; and after I had seen him, I knew nothing more for weeks, except that he had almond-shaped dark eyes, a straight nose, and a smile; that he talked rather fast, and that he talked a great deal to me. My aunt told me that if he had wished it the Emperor would have made him a baron. A few days later she told me he wished to marry me.

"How I consented I really can hardly tell. Secret correspondence went on between my aunt and my parents; and mother wrote to me and told me how happy my prospects were, and how little money I should ever have of my own; and how sad and anxious she had once been for my future. One reason, I think, why I at length yielded, one reason why I did not shrink from this marriage as I might have done, was just the very fact that for me there was no love in it. Marriage came to me as something completely outside myself; it came to me simply as a new shell of circumstance, into which, with unavowed pressure, mother and all the others pushed me

How could I know what I was doing, or what was being done to me? I had no experience.

"Well, I have experience now. And yet who would think it? No one who had watched me or lived with me, no matter how constantly or closely. Who could guess the history of my first married years? Certainly not my husband; and for one very sufficient reason, he never would care to try. My brother Robert told me how, when he first went to school, he used to cry to himself at nights, longing for home, thinking with a passionate affection of every worn patch in the carpets, and of the air full of peace and tenderness. For three years after my marriage I did just the same. I had plenty of servants, and an extravagant cook: but every time I looked at our smart dinner-table I thought of our school-room meals—our broiled mutton—our rice pudding; and I longed like a truant to run away and go back to them. What would mother have thought if she had seen me come back to her, and hiding, as I should have liked to hide, my face once more in her lap!

"What could I have told her? How could I have explained such a step? I could not have explained it in any intelligible way to her. I could indeed have summed up my experience in a very few words. I could have said to her, Marriage is the suicide of hope; but I could tell her no facts that would explain so tragic a view. I could have told her that Paul's temper was not always, or often, of the best. In fact when I made mistakes in any little household matters, he was furious with me; and once, though I must say he was handsomely sorry for it afterward, he struck me on the wrist with an ivory paper knife, leaving a mark which for a fortnight I hid

with a velvet band. I didn't mind that. Indeed I think the only time that I ever voluntarily kissed Paul was after he had struck me, just to show that I had forgiven him. No—what I minded was not what he was, but the sense which he inflicted on me daily of what he was not. He liked me in a way. In a way he took good care of me. But the way was this: he regarded me as a piece of china, which ornamented his drawing-room, and which had to be dusted carefully. The only difference between me and an *épergne* he was very proud of, was that it stood in the middle of the table, and I sat at the end of it. I was like a book which he valued for the rarity of its binding, but which he neither could nor cared to read. How long I hoped against hope that this might not be true—that he was merely shy, merely slow in understanding me, and that we should at last really become companions! I tried to love him, and to make him love me, and could I only have met with any response from him, to some extent at least, I should have succeeded. I tried every means I could think of. In the afternoon I used to hurry home, in order to meet him when he returned from the railway he was then making. I did all I could to look glad and happy when I saw him. But the only result was this. Five minutes after I was in the drawing-room he was sure to go out of it; and if ever I ventured to follow him into his study, he invariably met me by asking me what I wanted. What did I want? It makes me laugh now to think of his asking that of me. It was something, Paul, you could never have understood, if I had told you. But at dinner, Paul, you couldn't rebuff me for being with you; and do you remember how I tried then to find my way into your life? I tried at first to

talk about the things that interested me or touched me—about the things that seemed to me to be beautiful, or happy, or sad, or perplexing. Good heavens! I might have been talking Hebrew to you. I put my thoughts into your hands—thoughts which I valued and cherished; and I hoped that you might be pleased with them. But what you did was to stare at them blankly, and then drop them, and let them break themselves into pieces. But still I would not be disheartened. I tried to approach you in another way. As you would not talk to me about my subjects, I tried to talk to you about yours. That annoyed you still more. It made you rude to me, not only cold. How different you were with men—with the men you brought to dine with you! They and you understood each other. You responded to what they said to you, as if you were a musical instrument touched by them—or rather a band of instruments—a band of instruments at a music hall. When I spoke to you, it was as if I was thumping on wood. To try to talk to you was like going out into a frosty day. How cold I was when I came back to myself again!

“During those three years, it seems to me that I was dead. If it had not been for my two children I should have died literally. I was very fond of them from the first; but babies are not companions. Though they were near my heart, they could not tell how it was aching. Still they kept me alive. They prevented my heart from freezing. But when the eldest began to know me, and speak and understand a little, then I was conscious of some new accession of happiness; and gradually, to my surprise, I felt in better spirits. I felt at last that I was something like myself again; and to Paul’s



extreme annoyance, I sang in the hall one morning. He swore at me, and I cried. No matter. What I was going to say was this. This revival of my spirits, through my growing love for my children, had a very odd effect on me. My vanity woke up again. I wanted company, I wanted a little amusement. Sometimes in the afternoon, when I was left all alone, I used to look at myself in the glass, and wish that someone could see me. I should have been quite satisfied with a woman. I should often have liked a woman best; but sometimes, I confess, I did wish for a man or two—just for the sake of seeing what effect I produced. My desire for admiration had all the temerity of innocence. That I could do anything wrong, or even wish for it, never seemed possible to me. Well—I made some acquaintances, not among Paul's connections. I made friends with some pretty and well-connected women; and through them I came to know a certain number of men. My wishes soon fulfilled themselves. Every afternoon I had some admiring visitors.

“What things in life can be more different than some of our wishes before their fulfillment and after! These men I speak of—all their attention and homage at first flattered and soothed me after Paul's neglect. Paul could never see too little of me. They could never see too much. At first this was charming. I really took an interest in some of them, and thought they did in me. But little by little, various things enlightened me. These men saw my beauty; but I now divined how they saw it; and they appeared to me hardly human. When their voices grew soft, how I hated them! And yet, in spite of this I allowed them to go on calling on me; and I

began to take a sort of perverse pleasure in keeping them captive under false colors. I sheltered my real self—the self they could never understand—under an outer husk of the false self that they imagined; and I thus enjoyed two different sorts of pride—one derived from their admiration of me, the other derived from my contempt for them.

“This has not been good for me; but it led to what was worse. The women with whom I now associated, and who were friends also of these men, almost before I was aware of it, made me one of their sisterhood. I thought they were angels first; and then I learnt that they were not angels. How kind and pleasant they were to me, and what torture they inflicted on me, when they first let me know them thoroughly! What they did, so far as I am concerned, was this. They did not induce me to follow their ways; but they made me familiar with their ideas. One of them lent me a number of French novels. They were novels by celebrated writers—classics; but oh, how wicked they seemed! How wicked the women were in them! I felt this, and yet I read. I read one book after another. But then after a time, I felt I could stand it no longer. Some of the books I burnt; and others, I don’t know where they are.

“If anyone else—I again come back to that—if anyone else were to read what I have just written, what dreadful things he or she would think of me! I should seem to be suggesting so much more than I have said. Wrong! wrong! What I have said has been the uttermost that I mean, so far as badness and folly goes. And now I have this to add. These women, these men—their companionship and their flattery, were not all my life even then,

or indeed, I think, the most important part of it. For just as my happiness in my children roused my vanity and my wish for excitement, because it raised my spirits, so did this excitement and this tribute to my vanity, revive in me other things, not by raising my spirits but by troubling them. Those dreadful novels were not the only books I read; nor was admiration the only thing I thought of. I took again to my books of science and philosophy; I bought translations of all kinds of classical writers. My old longing to realize my own existence once more took possession of me; and all the false companionship which I now got, made my mind tumultuous with longing for some companionship that should be true. As to what this true companionship would be, I was as far off as ever from knowing. Would it take the form of knowledge, of beauty, or of a human friend! I know one thing—that not once, but several times, when the best of my admirers was coming to see me, and I had promised to be in by a certain hour in the afternoon, I forgot all about him in looking at a March sunset from a lonely seat among some pine trees, more than a mile from home.

“And what am I now? How structureless all my history is. What I have just written applies to the last four or five years of my life; and applies to me at this moment. Am I fairly good? or am I very bad? Five or six men are, I know, this moment in love with me; and I have been proud to think they are so, though I have no love for them. Is not that bad? But somehow, when I think it over, it makes me feel, not how bad I am, but how lonely I am. I have never in my whole life been myself to anyone. I have so many unuttered thoughts

troubling me and increasing in number. I don't know what I should have been could I only have met someone, who would have helped me to live—with whom I could have shared something beyond a part of his income and the parentage of two children—a number that never will be added to.

"Oh, you—what have you done to me! You took me—you *would* marry me. You took an entire life, and you sacrificed it, in order to ornament one small corner of your own. And I—I tried to love you. I waited for you and watched for you during your absence. I ran to meet you when you came. Your own mind was for me like waterless sand; none of my thoughts would grow in it. I found that out; and then what I tried to do was to share that desert with you, acting as if it were some kind oasis. And I would have done this had you let me. In some sort I would have learned to love you; Paul, I would have indeed done that; but you repulsed me. Do you remember that night when you struck me, and when I kissed you because I saw you were sorry? You were sorry you struck me; you were sorry you had struck a woman; you were ashamed of yourself; but not even then did you show any tenderness for me. It is not the blow I remember with any bitterness. It is what came after.

"And now, whom can I speak to? To no one. You have made me bitterly wise. You have taken even my mother from me. Not even to her can I speak with perfect confidence. You have made me feel that she sacrificed her daughter, treated her daughter as a thing without heart or soul. You have driven me into the company of waters, and woods, and sunsets. In nature I do feel

a vague something that touches me, that moves in me the religious impulse, that calls me out of myself. And yet whenever I see a beautiful thing, along with the sense of its beauty, I have this sense also—that I have no one to whom I can turn, and say ‘how beautiful!’

“Mother, perhaps, would tell me that I ought to make the best of things. I know she thinks I could be happy and successful socially. Could I? . How little she knows. She sees me, as I too can see myself in the glass. She sees me dressed perfectly, from the hat to the tips of my shoes. She sees how certain shades of color become me. But for all that I am alone. She doesn’t wish me to be bad; and I can’t be worldly. Great ladies alarm me; bad women repel me. What a simple life would content me, if I could only live it!

“And yet I am ungrateful. One treasure I have, though one only—my children. They keep me alive; they prevent my soul from dying. If there is any revelation at all, my children reveal God to me. Oh, my beloved ones, let me pour out my heart to you! Let me spend and be spent for you. My little ones, forgive your mother, for I have sometimes been so selfish as this: I have wished that you might be ill and suffering, that I might wear myself out in tending you.

“And yet, my little ones, there are solitudes in your mother’s heart, which you even cannot fill. She can be your companion, but in some ways you cannot be hers.”

Mrs. Schilizzi, when she finished her reading, with a listless deliberation took up her pen, and though her hand trembled as she did so, she set herself to resume her writing. She tried to continue her narrative without any formal break; but having completed a sentence or

two she presently scratched them out, and abandoning all attempt at literary form or consistency, she abruptly put down the date, and slowly, but without hesitation, wrote the following few lines, which might have come from the diary of a child.

"I am at Lichtenbourg now. All these pages were written here. I like it very much. It is very pretty; but, as usual, I have been alone. To my amazement, Mr. Grenville reappeared this evening, and spoke to me very kindly. I believe he is kind really. I had come to think that, when I was here with him before, he was laughing at me or amusing himself by pretending to be kind. But I don't think so now; and I am beginning to feel grateful. A very little kindness, of real kindness, quite upsets me. Oh, how my head is aching. If I think more I shall make a fool of myself. I will kiss my children, and then try to sleep. Olga, darling, darling, I shall have you by my side."

## CHAPTER X.

**GRENVILLE**, who was bent on making his expedition to the castle, and who was anxious to secure Mrs. Schilizzi as his companion, was annoyed, as he dressed next morning, to remember her account of her occupations, and to think that it was many hours before he could hope to see her. Just, however, as he was about to leave the hotel, in order to pay an early visit to the springs, a pretty looking French maid tripped after him with a note, scribbled in pencil, and consisting of the following words: "I am not well, and shall not be writing this morning. If you can do so, will you take me for a walk at eleven? —IRMA SCHILIZZI."

Grenville was delighted, and sent back Yes for an answer. At eleven o'clock they met by the glittering kiosk. Close to this was a bed purple with violets. They both stooped to inhale the pure, delightful perfume, and they went off together as if the soul of the spring were in their pulses. As they passed through the town the entire world seemed young. Sunshine lay on all the people they came across. The little shops twinkled with their wares, as if shopkeeping were a happy-hearted play.

"Look," said Mrs. Schilizzi, as they passed a villa garden, "at the bells of the magnolias white in the blue sky!"

Grenville turned to her with a smile of half amazement.

"You know," he said, "how princes and princesses in fairy tales are transformed into cats or lions, and every kind of shape. It seems to me to-day as if happiness had been transformed into flowers."

His own happiness was such, indeed, that he had gone on walking beside her, without any thought of what direction they were taking; but realizing presently that they had left the town behind them he said to her, "Where are we going? have you any idea? I've not."

"I am taking you," she said, "to a place I've found out myself. Do you see this river which comes flowing out of the woods and valleys? We are going to turn into the footpath, which skirts it beside the willows."

They left the road, following the course she indicated. Birds sang with the water, and all the foliage whispered. At last they reached a curious timbered mill, with which was united a simple but picturesque restaurant. There was a garden containing arbors, and a large inviting summer house. "I often," said Mrs. Schilizzi, "bring my children to tea here. The woman gives them such beautiful cakes and biscuits; and early in the season, she tells me, it is always perfectly quiet. You mustn't think I do nothing but talk to Austrian officers."

They passed through the gate and seated themselves on the green benches of the summer house. "I'm a little tired," she said. "Will you order a cup of coffee for me? Last night I was restless and hardly slept at all. It would have been nice to have breakfasted here; but I must go back to my children. Ah!" she went on, when the coffee was brought out to her, "how peaceful this place is! Will you tell me, while we rest, for you



have not told me yet—what you have seen in Italy, and why you have returned to Lichtenbourg?”

They had attempted during their walk no serious conversation; they had both been content with merely being happy together, and the consequence was they were now quietly at their ease with each other.

“I wonder,” Grenville answered, “if you believe in mesmerism. Mesmerists, it is said, can make their subjects come back to them at a specified time, and no matter from what distance. I believe that old castle, whose picture the princess showed us, must have mesmerized me and brought me back here. It is only ten miles away. You think I am laughing at you; I see that in your face. But I am not, only——”

“Only what?”

“The question you asked me sounded a very simple one, but to answer it truly, do you know what I should have to inflict on you? A long discourse on the philosophy of life generally—especially upon prose and poetry, and the types of life that correspond to them.”

“Go on,” she said, starting with surprise and pleasure. “This is what I like listening to.”

He hesitated a little as if doubtful how to express himself. “You know,” he began, “how all our modern philosophers denounce as useless the life of the contemplative monastic orders. Virtue they say is utility, not private perfection. But to Christian critics, at all events, the monks and nuns have an answer. Different people have different works in the world; theirs is to be a complete realization of certain spiritual possibilities, which every Christian should try to realize partially. Well, what the saints are for men as Christians, the poets are

for men as men. The highest use of the ordinary career of action, is to improve the conditions of living. The use of the poet is to illustrate, to reveal, or to enlarge the resources of life itself. Do you see my meaning?"

"Yes," she said eagerly, "of course I do."

"I talk of poets," he continued, "but I didn't mean merely people who write verses. I mean people whose preponderating desire is to live the life of which poetry is the articulate expression. Poetry is merely the body of which those who appreciate it are the soul. Few people can write good love poems, but whoever loves deeply, lives one."

"Go on," she murmured, "your words are like carrier pigeons. My feelings have wings, but my words can hardly flutter."

"A new poet," he said, "is like a new spring, making new flowers grow in the human mind; but they must have been sleeping there beforehand. I am not thinking specially of love, but of every kind of feeling that fills the mind with music, or lifts it with aspiration. Think of Shelley and Goethe, and then of Napoleon and the Duke of Wellington. Compared with a campaign or a revolution, what a foolish thing a poem seems! And yet all that makes life worth fighting for is the jewels that the poets brighten. I am obliged to say all this, as you will see presently, in order to defend myself from my own self-criticisms. Let me tell you what I think is the true definition of poetry. It is the emotional expression of a sense of life's value, or else of disappointment at not finding in it a value it once was thought to have. I don't mean that a poem need be all sentiment. Poems like 'Faust' and 'Hamlet' may be full of profoundest thought:

but thought in poetry is always thought which is indirect connection with emotion: and that emotion, whatever it may be, depends upon some belief in the value and the beauty of life. Well, such being the case, I put the matter in this way. Poetry is religion secularized; and the poetic life, or, if you like to call it so, the romantic life, is the monastic life secularized. You may say that in one sense it is useless; but it embodies and keeps up an idea just as truly as the life of a monastic body vowed to perpetual adoration. What are you listening to? The clock? Yes—it is striking twelve."

"We must go," she said, "my children breakfast in half an hour. Don't stop what you are saying. Finish it as we walk back."

"A love-match," he resumed as soon as they were on their way—"I mean a marriage which has nothing but love to recommend it, is an attempt at the poetic life, even if it is not always an attainment of it. Most people—and in most cases they are right—think such a marriage ridiculous. The reason is that the lovers in most cases have not a true vocation. You see," he went on, picking up a stone and jerking it into the river, and speaking in a matter-of-fact voice as if he were reading an advertisement out of the *Times*, "the need for this kind of life varies in intensity in different natures. But I believe, though I have never been fortunate enough to prove the belief by experience, that for some people who find affection, and who leave for its sake houses and lands and ambition, the heavens are opened as truly as they were for Stephen."

They were both silent for a time, not from any sense of embarrassment, but merely because respectively they

were following out their own thoughts. At last she said gently, "But Stephen's vision was a dream."

"Yes," said Grenville, "and what higher end could there be for all practical activity, for all public careers, for all social reforms, than to make beds for all of us on which to dream dreams like these?"

Again there was silence which presently he interrupted with a laugh. She looked at him nervously and asked him what amused him. "Merely to think," he said, "how far I must seem to have strayed from the question you asked me—why I came back to Lichtenbourg. Well, what we have just been saying, will help me to tell you why. I have no vocation for the high poetic life. My lot is cast among prose, and labor, and ambition. But the poetic life still at times has charms for me; and I long to escape to that happy world of the imagination, where those for whom love and romance bear no direct message, can follow and hear their echoes in all the valleys of the past. That world of the imagination I now find in this country. This country to me happens to represent poetry; it liberates me from the limitations of my circumstances. Italy last week represented prose. That is why I have come back here. I am like a schoolboy who has run home from school. Do you understand all this nonsense?"

"Yes," she said, "yes. I didn't answer you because I'm thinking about it. Of course," she went on presently, "people must act and work. Goethe said that action is the cure of doubt; but it seems to me that it is the cure of aspiration also. I only speak for myself. I want, personally, not to act, but to be. That is the reason why I was so interested in what you said about

saints and poets. Poetry, the sense of beauty, and the aspiration for something beyond, which comes from the sense of beauty as the scent comes from a flower—you say that this is religion secularized. I should be content to say simply that it is religion; and I should wish if I knew how, to lead the religious life. I sometimes think it is wicked to feel like this—that it is wishing to be selfish and useless; but you have reassured me a little. Besides, when a woman"—she said this slowly and softly—"when a woman says that she wishes not to act but to be, her real wish, I suppose, is to be something for the sake of somebody else. I want to be something, for instance, for the sake of my children. They are my religion—or at least the practical part of it. The next service will be their breakfast or luncheon. Will you take part in it? If you will, you will be very welcome; and you will see what I think is a real triumph of management—that I have got the *chef* to make me a genuine child's rice pudding."

He was not only pleased but touched by this homely invitation. As he entered her salon with her, where the cloth was already laid, she said to him, "Mr. Grenville, you will think I am very stupid. I am so, I know; but with you I seem more stupid than I am. You keep me silent by giving me so much to think of."

Had she made such a speech to him when first he began to know her, he would have certainly tried to acknowledge it with some species of compliment. But now the stage of compliments seemed to have passed away; and his only answer was: "No, you are not stupid." The children rushed to their mother, like flowers opening in the sun; and then turning to Gren-

ville, who had played with them when they were staying with the Princess, they gave him a share of the smiles which their mother had called into existence. A sense of partnership with her subtly stole into his heart and spread its enchantment over the whole simple meal. This was deepened from time to time by the gentle unconscious way in which she asked him to do this or that for the children, as if he were a friend whom she might call on for all assistance; and through all his present consciousness echoes of their morning's conversation made a vibrating music and the ripple of the river sang to him.

The children had a passion for flowers; and asked Grenville, who told them he had seen quantities in the meadows, why he had not brought them some. "Suppose," he said, turning to Mrs. Schilizzi, "that we have tea at the mill. They can, as we go, pick flowers to their heart's content." The proposal was received by the children with exclamations of delight, and the mother's eyes had assented even before her lips did. "Let us go at five," she said, "till then it is too hot."

"In that case," said Grenville, "hot as it is, I will fill up the time between by a visit I have been meaning to pay—a visit to Count T——, to whom I have an introduction, and who no doubt will tell us something about the country."

The count's castle, perched on its wooded eminence, could be reached on foot by a climb of half an hour. Grenville's visit was in every way satisfactory; and when he rejoined his friends and went off to the mill with them, he was full of accounts of what he had heard and seen. "The castle," he said, "of which the Prin-

cess told us, can be reached from here easily; and the Count declares it is really the most curious sight in the country. He was particularly anxious also that I should go to a place of his own—an hotel which he has built in the heart of one of his forests, near a lake and a mineral spring, and which is going to be opened presently. He has a hunting lodge close by, which, if I cared for fishing, he said would be at my disposal for as long as I chose to occupy it. Suppose one day we accept this handsome offer, so far as to drive over there, and use the lodge for a picnic."

They were sitting in the summer house, the scene of their morning's talk, hearing the mill wheel turn with its plunging murmur, and watching the children as they went to and fro like butterflies. Presently, at the gate of the garden appeared an itinerant flute player, who began some simple melody, the notes of which were sweet as a thrush's. The children dropped their flowers, and ran off to listen to him. Mrs. Schilizzi, pleased with the scene before her, seemed pleased still farther at the idea of the proposed expedition. Seeing this Grenville continued, "I have something else to propose besides. The castle we were speaking of belongs to a Baron K—, who has two rooms in it, which he occupies for a week sometimes; and he is, the Count tells me, expected there in a day or two. While he is in residence, the castle is closed to strangers. So what do you say? Do you think you would have the energy to take time by the forelock, and go there with me to-morrow?"

"Listen to the flute," she said. "To-day has been full of music. To go to the castle would make to-morrow

full of it also. Find out about getting there, and this evening I will tell you if I can manage it."

He met her at the band, after dinner. They stayed there for a short time only. The scene struck both of them as artificial, after their late experiences; but he sat with her long enough to convince her that the expedition was an easy one, and when he said good-night to her she had agreed to undertake it with him. It was too long for the children, so she stipulated for a late start, which would leave them their mother's company for nearly all the morning. An hour's drive and half an hour in the train, brought them to a station almost at the foot of the castle. It was a station which stood among flat fields and furrows, and all around were hills covered with forest. Here and there some peasant women were working; the roads were nothing but primitive unfenced tracks; silence and sunshine slept on the whole country. And straight before them, rising from the quiet levels, was a spire of rock, covered with wood, and gleaming with roofs and turrets.

Mrs. Schilizzi gave an exclamation of delight. "You are better than your word," she said. "This is indeed a country of romance."

Near as the castle was—they seemed to be almost under it—they had before them harder work than they bargained for. The beginning of the ascent was up some grassy slopes, which brought them at last to a grove of ragged pine trees; and here, gray among the foliage, they discovered a moss-grown tower. Passing through this by a gateway, they found themselves on a rising road, with a battlemented wall on the outer side, and impending precipices on the inner—a road which wound



upward round the rock like a corkscrew. At every fifty yards they came to a fresh tower, with an iron door and a moldering coat-of-arms, and now and then to a gap spanned by a creaking drawbridge. The ascent was so steep and long, and the whole scene was so singular that they often paused, at once to rest and to think. Down below there were the fields at an increasing depth; up in the air were the walls and gables of the castle. Even Fritz, who had accompanied them, was overcome with the spectacle, and said to his master, "Sir, if these trees could talk, what strange things they would tell!" As for Grenville and Mrs. Schilizzi, they hardly spoke at all. He at first had made one or two observations; but she presently said, "Don't talk. I feel as if I were in a cathedral." They were conscious, however, of thinking the same thoughts; and by and by, seeing that she was growing tired, he had merely to look at her, and without thanks or apology, she took his arm, and silently leaned her weight on it.

Thus they reached the summit. Under some archways hung a smell of wood smoke; and here and there a few cocks and hens were straying. These were the first signs of life they had come across; and Fritz was sent to see if he could find the custodian. Grenville and his companion found themselves meanwhile in an irregular courtyard, filled with old copper water tanks, and surrounded by a medley of doors, arcades, and windows. One of the doors was open. Mrs. Schilizzi looked in, and discovered a miniature disused chapel, hanging on the very edge of the precipice. There was a book on the altar, some candlesticks, and some fragments of gold lace; and some fixed worm-eaten seats, which would

have held perhaps twenty worshippers. The air seemed full to her of the prayers of dead generations, and suddenly she realized that in the seat nearest the altar, was a kneeling figure, habited in full armor, with its gauntleted hands clasped, and stretched toward the crucifix. Her insight told her, what she afterward discovered was the truth, that for hundreds of years had this figure remained there kneeling. Moved and awed, she hardly could tell why, she herself too sank on her knees, and half outstretched her hands in a similar rapt attitude. In a few minutes' time she rejoined Grenville outside. He saw that she wished to speak, but was afraid of her own voice. She found it at last, and taking hold of one of the buttons of his coat, she said, "Do you remember at the foot of the hill, we passed a poor woman, who was sitting with a sick baby? I want to go down, and see if we can't help her. I want to help someone—I want to do something good. Is this poetry—is this religion? What is happening to me? I hardly know myself."

He saw her swallow some strong access of agitation. He saw the effort undulate in her throat. "Wait," he said, "for a moment. Here is Fritz with the custodian. Fritz, at the foot of the castle, was a poor woman with a baby. Give her a florin; ask if she wants help; and tell her the lady will presently come and speak to her."

"She is here," said Fritz. "She is the custodian's wife. I think they are only tired. It is a long way to get up here."

The woman was entering the court at the very moment. Mrs. Schilizzi almost ran toward her; but moving gently as soon as she got near, spoke to her in a voice so gentle, that the woman looked up in wonder. Gren-

ville saw her presently take the child in her arms, and carrying it, go with the mother through some low shadowy archway. The rose of her face presently came back again into the daylight. "I know," she said, "what it is that the child wants. I have told the woman it shall be sent to-morrow to her from Lichtenbourg."

They prepared now to follow the custodian through the building. While he was unlocking a door, she softly, as if forgetting herself, laid her hand upon Grenville's arm, and her cheek was near his shoulder. The rooms they entered were full of dust and echoes. They were bare of all furniture except a few dilapidated tables, and a multitude of rude portraits hanging on the whitewashed walls. But in place of furniture, in one room after another, were piles of rusty armor, heaped up like haystacks. They saw the quarters which the Baron was shortly to occupy, once the priest's, and almost as bare as the others. Saints and scenes from the Bible, almost obliterated by time, were daubed on the rough plaster; and if it had not been for some china pipes on racks, and some pairs of Hessian boots, they would still have seemed the abode of some ascetic of the Middle Ages. By and by descending a narrow staircase, they emerged through a low door, and found themselves in the open air again. They were on a narrow platform, hanging over the precipice; and all about them were loop-holed turrets and batteries, clinging to the rock like swallows' nests, and connected by scrambling stairs. The hush came over them, which is caused by the spectacle of a great depth. Presently they saw at one side of them a little triangular garden, supported on a ledge by parapets, and reached by some rough steps. There were a

few bushes in it; and a bench on which they seated themselves. Looking toward the custodian they noticed that his head was bare. A second glance showed them he was standing under a wooden crucifix. There was in his face a hardy devout patience, and a manliness mixed with melancholy, that seemed strangely in keeping with the gaunt sacred image, embrowned by a thousand storms. They called him to them, and talked to him. He was grateful for their interest in his child, and showed a simple pleasure in telling them of his monotonous life. Once each week either he or his wife descended to the world below to purchase their scant necessities; otherwise, they lived alone in this aerial solitude. Once a year a priest said mass in the chapel; once a year the baron came for a day or two; and now and then some visitors. These were his only incidents. They asked him to look for Fritz, and tell him to go on to the station and see that their dinner was ready for them, which they had ordered at the small restaurant.

The man went and left them alone together.

"You mustn't," she said presently, "take me to any more places like this."

"Why not?" he asked.

"I can't tell why it is," she said, "but they overwhelm me. If one's soul, if one's imagination, has a heart, as one's body has, they make mine throb and beat so that I can hardly live." She turned her eyes to him, sad like an evening sky. "I have lived," she said, "so seldom, or rather not at all. I am not accustomed to it." Presently she went on, "I don't know why I feel like this; but it's you, I think, who have set my imagin-

ation going. This rock, I suppose, is not tall enough to make it difficult for one's lungs to breathe; but as a rock of imagination it seems to touch the clouds; and here in the high silence the past is face to face with us. And yet," she said, pushing a stone with the tip of her parasol, "is it the past that moves me? I can't tell what it is. Look at the sunset. That too seems to be part of it."

"It is," said Grenville, "what I called romance or poetry, yesterday morning when we talked together at the mill. I see you understand it quite as well as I do—even better. I only stand on tiptoe—you float in the air."

"I wonder," she murmured, "if we have any right to float. Perhaps we were made only to walk—to plod."

"That," he said, "is a question we must each answer for ourselves. Fancy a stock broker trying to cultivate ecstasies, or St. Francis as a bull or bear. What is folly in most people is elevation in some. I tell you that for me this life I am now leading, is an episode only—a moment's return to his house of one of the younger sons of poetry, who has no inheritance in the ideal; and who must make his way, toiling among the furrows of prose."

As he said this, he was conscious that she flinched a little. "I suppose," she said, "all this elevation we talk of is a very fine thing for wise men to play with; but it is fit to fill the lives only of silly women. Your plaything may be our life; or if we find it is your plaything, our death."

"How quickly you misunderstand me," he said, "almost as quickly as you understand me. Listen and let me explain myself. You thought just now that I was

laughing at you. I was afraid before, that you would be doing the same by me."

The tone of his voice reassured her. "Yes," she said, "explain. I am listening. How could you think I laughed at you?"

"If a man," he replied, "is too much of a dreamer, he easily becomes laughable; and my fear was not that you should think that I made a plaything of sentiments, of elevation, of poetry, or whatever we like to call it; but that I took it too seriously. Look—may I read you this? I was just on the point of showing it to you. It is a rough copy of something I meant to put in my diary. I scribbled it on the back of a letter when I was staying with the Princess. I begin by saying just what we said yesterday—that a love-marriage is an attempt to realize poetry in life; and then I go on like this: 'Such a love to which all life is subservient, is good for poets only, or for men whose career is imaginative art of some kind. There are others who can feel it, but who are no more than half poets, and who, if they succeed anywhere, must succeed in what is called the world. Now for such men love is the world's great rival, and the only match for the world at its own game. It is the ideal forever luring them away from the actual; and filling life with a dream of impossible meaning, it makes them hope for everything, and do nothing. During all my early life it had that effect on me; or rather, not it, but my belief in it, and my hope to find it. It is only since its power is broken that I am at last beginning to act; and I go on talking about it because I am so glad to be free from it; yes, and partly also because I sigh for its lost magic. And yet why should I sigh? I find I have no occasion.

I feared till very lately that my practical ambition had possibly taken root in me because my sense of life's poetry was dead, and that, if I gained the world, I should find I had paid my soul for it. But my experience in Hungary has shown me that my fear was false. Poetry, love, the ideal, has here come back to me, with all its old fascinations, but free from its old danger. The romance which I once sought to enjoy by personally enslaving myself to it, I enjoy now with the freedom of an artistic spectator; and I enjoy it all the more in life, because I am not troubled by it in my own life. Here is the difference between this romance and the other. I belonged to the other. This belongs to me."

"How foolish," she said, "I must seem to you. You must be forbearing with me, because I have shown you my weakness. Your career is not art; but you take all this as an artist. To me it is nothing at all; or else it is life—it is religion."

"You know," he replied, after a pause, "that space has three dimensions. So has life; and as lived by different people it may consist of different movements—of lateral movements, or a movement upward. The movement upward is the movement of saints, and poets, and yourself. The reason is that they and that you have wings. I have long lost mine; they fell from me with my boy's curls. And yet when you talk to me I feel the fanning of yours."

She rose from her seat, and looked down at him.

"Do you know what you do?" she said. "It is something that you shouldn't. Instead of saying what is true, you say the thing which is the very exact opposite. Look at your watch, will you; for I think, to judge by

the light, that instead of a movement upward, we ought to begin one downward."

As they went together down the winding road, unnoticed by him she often turned and looked at him with the curious intentness of a child.

Suddenly she said, laughing, "Had you curls, when you were a little boy?"

He laughed too, and again admitted that he had.

"When you were a little boy," she asked, "what name did they call you?"

He told her it was "Bobby."

She repeated the word softly. "That," she said, "was my brother's name." She looked him in the face for a moment, and once more repeated "Bobby."

"And you," he said, laughing, "when you were a little girl, I know what they called you; for your name no one would alter. It was Irma—Miss Irma—little Irma."



## CHAPTER XI.

THAT evening, before she went to bed, inspired by the events of the day she produced the sheets of her diary; and having given her children's eyelids the gentle benediction of her kiss, she drew a long sigh, and began writing as follows :

"I have had during the last two days, an entirely new experience. I have met a man who cares to talk to me, because he understands my thoughts; and who does not look at me with the eyes of a cowardly beast of prey. At first he did not care to look at me at all. Well—even that, though it humbled me, is better than the ways of other men, though at times, for despised moments these have flattered my vanity. At first, too, I thought he laughed at me. Perhaps he did. As a member of society he thought nothing of me; and I have no doubt thinks nothing now. I am glad; for somehow, in that case, I am more touched by the change in him. Except once—and then it seemed unnatural to him—so far as I can remember, he has never paid me a compliment, unless it be the compliment of understanding me; and he talks to me not about myself, but about the things that are more than myself to me. To be understood! to me the very thought is astonishment. The sensation is so strange to me it makes me a new creature. I think it is Carlyle, or some German quoted by Carlyle, who says that a thought gains infinitely in value to the thinker, when he finds

that another shares it. The same is the case with feeling. Bobby—I mean Bobby my brother—described once to me the pleasure he felt in China, at hearing in some strange place, the sound of his own language. For the first time in my life I have heard someone talk mine. He does more. He not only talks my language but enlarges it; for in addition to saying things that I have often said before, he says others that I have never said, but which become mine the moment he has said them. Naturally he only knows a part of me; but what he does know, he knows better than I myself do. He seems to have liberated in me a host of thoughts that were in prison.

“How freely I am writing. That I can do so, is all to his credit; for it is a witness to the fact that he has never tried to make love to me. He has the manner of a man who has made love to others; but he certainly has not done so to me. It would have been easy for him to do so, considering the subjects we talked about; but I noticed this—that whenever love was mentioned, he carefully divested his voice of any note of sentiment, and contrived to give me the same secure unembarrassed feeling I should have had if we were talking politics. What have I written? much more unembarrassed than that. I know nothing of politics, and couldn’t talk about them if I tried.

“And yet, on certain grounds, I do not feel so secure. To be understood in this way spoils me. It is taking me away from the hard benches and the starved table of a school, to which I must return; and is showing me what my life might be—a thing which I had best forget. He said that poets made a spring in the world’s mind, call-

ing out sleeping flowers. His understanding me has done the same in mine. Little phrases of his stick in my mind; and wherever one of them rests a flower has blossomed. I express what has happened to me by such an odd succession of metaphors. I feel as if I were floating—as if I were being taken off my feet. He—no, not he, but the fact that he has understood me—makes my thoughts rise like a kite on wind.”

Next day she continued thus:

“We are going to-morrow to see Count T——’s hotel in the forest. Mr. Grenville came in after the children’s dinner to arrange about it; and an incident happened which confirms me in all I thought about him. It was simple in itself, and yet I hardly know how to write it; for in a certain sense it touches myself so closely. I will try, however, and see how the words come. The waiter, in laying the table, had moved some of my books—a pile of them; and had put them on a chair near the window. Many of them were English poets. Mr. Grenville took some of them up, and made some remark about the library I carried about with me. I thought of telling him—but I had not the courage to do so—that I was making some notes about English poets, and the kind of feeling they had felt and expressed for Nature. I did say that I was making some notes; and he smiled and appeared interested, saying, ‘I see you have underlined a lot of Wordsworth.’ And then all of a sudden, under the books of poetry, he came on a heap of horrible French novels. I call them horrible: but, as I have said before, they were classics; they were not books that it need be necessarily a disgrace to read; but the moment he noticed them, I saw him give a look at me, and his

voice and his expression changed. 'Your tastes are catholic,' he said, as he took one of them up. 'They're not,' I exclaimed, 'if you mean I've a taste for those. I didn't know they were here. They were packed up by mistake. I never knew I had them till this morning. Take them away—do. I have been always meaning to burn them.' I spoke with so much sincerity, that he at once became all right again. His face had a look of relief which said plainly 'I misjudged her.' But I still felt shy and awkward, and hurried on to explain myself. I said what a pity it was that books so full of genius, should have so much in them that one wished to forget having even so much as looked at. 'I know,' I said, 'one is always told that they are justified because they are true; and perhaps they are true, and so novels ought to be: but the impression they leave on one is, not that they are true, but that they are bad.'

"Now how I arrived at the conclusion I don't know, except that it was by instinct; but I am as certain, as if he had said in so many words, that he thought these books bad books for me personally. And he was right; they have been bad. But without dropping the subject he managed to give it a turn, which seemed to completely separate it from any connection with myself. 'These books,' he said, 'though, like you, I admire their genius, and also their truth, as compared with novels meant for the schoolroom, really *are* bad for some people; but for people like you and me, I believe the bad, the offensive, quality in them, is artistic badness rather than moral badness. I believe that in novels written for grown-up people, all sides of life should be treated with equal fairness; but the human imagination is so constituted

that six lines written about certain matters, will impress us with their reality quite as distinctly as six pages written about others. The French school of novelists, such as we now are talking of, wholly forget this; and though they may not give more space to the sensual side of man than to the mental, they produce on the mind of the reader a far more vivid impression of it. That is the artistic badness. The moral badness is this—that the impression with weak readers, corrupts the judgment long before it has appealed to it. And the novels we speak of are morally and artistically bad—not because they represent passion, but because they excite passion.'

"How true this is! I feel to myself to be so true that I could hardly have imagined it possible to discuss it with a man thus plainly; but there was something, not only in his phrases and in his way of putting the case, but in his tone and his manner also—something so full of a delicate and chivalrous feeling for me, that I had no sense of embarrassment. I was conscious of two things only—of being profoundly interested and also profoundly touched.

"He took the books with him. May I never see them again—they, nor any like them!

"I was just preparing to put my papers away when this happened. On the table I write stands a little oval looking-glass in a Dresden china frame. I happened to look in it, quite by accident, and noticed my own reflection. I am not vain—but I must confess this—I saw I was looking charming. Mr. Grenville, I believe, doesn't think me a bit pretty. Most men have thought nothing else about me. I am glad Mr. Grenville is like that. I like him to see in me the good points I am in doubt

about; not those about which I am certain. And yet, being a woman, I must in truth admit that I should like him to realize I was pretty, just as a fact of nature. I've a good mind, out of curiosity, to ask him if he does do so.

"To-morrow—yes, to-morrow, we are going into the heart of the forest. These expeditions to me are like her first balls to a girl. Everything is so unaccountably, so unfathomably fresh to me."

Before composing herself to sleep she knelt up in her bed, her hands crossed on the folds of her white drapery. She did not, even mentally, say any definite word, for the influences to which, as she grew up, her religion had been subjected, hardly admitted of this; but she let her soul like a sunflower turn to something beyond her and above her, as she rested for some moments in the attitude of an infant Samuel. When she closed her eyes now there was no frown on her forehead, but a placid faith in the day toward which sleep would waft her.

Faith in this case was certainly not disappointed. A light varnished carriage, whose brownness shone in the morning, adapted for rough roads, and drawn by four active little horses, who jingled bells as they moved and tossed red tassels, took them away with a speed that was in itself exhilaration. Out of the town they sped, through valleys and fields and orchards. Then came ground that was wilder, plantations of pine, and spaces covered with pine needles. Rocks cropped up through the soil, and prickly bushes dotted it. At last they entered a great undulating forest, where the branches whispered and the breath of the pine trees floated. Through this they drove for a good two hours at least

encountering all the way hardly a sign of life except some men who, in one place, were busy mending the road; and a wagon which they overtook, laden with chairs and tables, and which, as they surmised, must be bound for the Count's hotel.

They had arranged to picnic in the hunting lodge; and go to the hotel from thence. A sloping expanse, covered with heath and bog myrtle, at last appeared, like an island in the sea of foliage. Driving up this, and passing through a belt of trees, they saw the lodge before them—a whitewashed building, with a high-pitched tiled roof, and an open arcade by which the few rooms were connected. Fritz soon produced the forester and his wife, who took charge of it; and having made them aware who his master was, it was hardly a minute before the principal doors were open, and their hamper of provisions was being carried into the principal sitting-room.

Mrs. Schilizzi was in the happiest mood possible, and Grenville had caught it from her, in all its buoyant freshness. They insisted on being left to unpack their hamper for themselves; and she exclaimed with delight at the various delicacies contained in it, taxing him laughingly with being wrong and extravagant in having ordered them. Every unfolded package had all the savor of a discovery; every missing requisite, which they asked the old woman to supply, was the occasion of an adventure. Grenville ran her to earth in her own kitchen regions, and came back with stories of her pots and pans and her cooking stove, and she presently followed him in with a pile of plates and some old Bohemian glasses, with coats-of-arms in color on them. While she was arranging them and putting the last touches to the table, Grenville

and Mrs. Schilizzi took stock of the room—its bare polished floor, its velvet chairs and sofas, stiffly grouped together at one end round a table; they peeped into a writing-room, and a charming bedroom beyond; they examined some pieces of tapestry and a large number of horns, which formed the only decorations of the rudely distempered walls; and then at last they looked out of the windows. They turned to each other with delight, for straight before them, at a distance of a hundred yards or so, was the smooth glass of a lake, full of the sky and pine woods, which stretched itself out to a breadth of several miles, and reached away curving into some indefinite distance.

The pleasure of this prospect added a new zest to their meal. Its microscopic incidents were sufficient to fill the moment—the pouring out of the wine, the cutting up of the chicken, the extracting the salt from the paper packets that held it. They experienced together that most charming form of confidence—the common unashamed enjoyment of little things such as these. No thought seemed too small to communicate, no sense of amusement too trifling to share. Then they went out to inspect the landscape in the neighborhood, having first asked the way to the Count's hotel. The way, they presently found, hardly required asking; for the building was full in sight, at about a furlong's distance. It stood near to the lake, and was somewhat Swiss in appearance, surrounded with wooden balconies, and shaded by projecting roofs. They entered. It was full of a smell of newly planed wood and varnish. Though it was not yet open, the furnishing was nearly complete, and the manager was beside himself with delight at showing his



accommodation to the strangers. Some private suites were already fit for occupation; nothing was wanting but some fittings for the public salons. "The air," said the manager, "owing to the nearness of the pine trees, is supposed to be healthier even than that of Lichtenbourg, and the neighboring mineral spring has properties quite unique. Will not your excellencies honor me by taking coffee?"

They told him that the woman at the lodge was at that moment preparing some; and they slowly strolled back enchanted with all about them. There were grassy slopes, tufted with aromatic shrubs; there were glimpses of cart tracks leading away into the forest; there were reeds by the lakeside up to their waists in water; and a beech tree in front of the lodge made a shade on the warm soil. Here they had their coffee; their tray rested on the beech husks, and they themselves lay on some rugs beside it. During luncheon everything had reminded her of something in her childhood—of picnics with her brothers and sisters, and of absurd shifts they were put to. She told him how Dick stole her pocket-handkerchief for a napkin, and how Olga and Daisy used to say, "Do look at Irma gobbling." And Grenville had thought, though he forbore to tell her so, that he saw that submerged childhood shining still at the bottom of her eyes. Now, however, her mood had become more pensive. She talked not of the amusements of her childhood, but of its charms and dreams. "There were reeds like those," she said, "in a lake that was near our home. I used often to sit by them and wonder how Pan could have made his pipes." Then gradually one thing after another recalled to her her father's garden, its tall trees

and its flower beds. Each memory as it floated into her mind shaped itself into artless words; and now and then she would call Grenville's attention to something in the scene before her—some ripple of sunlight on the lake, or the ruddy or silvery bark of some gleaming tree, which appealed to her for its own sake only.

This quality in her of sensitiveness to natural beauty, struck Grenville afresh; and as they were driving back he kept thinking it over, and at last gave his thoughts utterance. She again told him, as she had told him once before, "that his appreciations were far deeper than hers."

"I think," he said, "they are just the same appreciations, only mine are like pictures in oil, on a canvas already painted on; yours are in transparent colors, shining on fresh white paper. Mine are like dusty, yours are like dewy, leaves; but when I see things with you, the feeling I have is this—that the dew on your thoughts sprinkles the dust on mine."

Later on, as the sun was beginning to set, and the lower tracts of the sky were flushing between the feathery branches, he said to her, "I have often wondered, noticing how mere colors of scenes like these move your sense of beauty, and stir your imagination—I have often wondered how you would be moved and stirred by Italy—by the sea, the skies, and the hills, as they shine through the crystal air."

"Ah!" she exclaimed softly, "if I could only see them!"

"I have seen them often," he continued, "but I have always seen them alone—I mean alone as regards any real enjoyment of them. If I have been looking at any-

thing that has specially moved me—whose witchery, as your friend Wordsworth says, has melted into my heart—I have never had anyone with me able to feel the same, or with whom I could exchange even a broken exclamation of pleasure. You, I think, would be pleased with just the same things as I am. All sorts of scenes and objects and aspects of things come floating into my mind at this moment, which I am sure would make you hold your breath by their beauty."

"Tell me," she said, "what sort of things."

He answered her slowly, as if he were talking to himself, enumerating chance memories. "The marble peaks," he began, "of the pure Carrara mountains, rising out of violent mist, and glittering in a sky of primrose color—the turquoise-colored crescent of water which one sees framed in the ilexes, under whose shade Shelley wrote "The Cenci"—white sands I have walked by in the hush of the morning, while the dark blue waters slept on them—boats gliding on Como with sails like the breasts of swans. I should like to be with you when you were looking at things like these—when you were listening to the songs of the peasants floating at dusk among the fire-flies, or the notes of the angelus trembling, some near, some distant, from half a dozen craggy villages among the Apennines."

"That is enough," she said. "Let me think a little of that. Every word is a picture; I wish we could see it all." Then suddenly she turned to him, and, looking at him with a smile of curiosity, "But you told me," she said, "that Italy was a place that represented prose to you."

She heard him sigh faintly, and for a moment he did

not speak. "I remember," he said at last. "But that was only on a special occasion; and it was due to—how shall we put it? to extraneous, or (shall we say?) adventitious, circumstances."

"What grand words!" she laughed. "I wonder what the circumstances were."

"I am not sure whether, supposing you care to hear, I may not one day tell you. If ever I do, you will know something about me, which at the present moment I hardly know myself."

When they reached Lichtenbourg it was latish. She was tired, and dined in her room. Grenville said to himself, among the clatter of plates in the restaurant; "It seems as if a brook had been rippling at my side all day, and the god Pan or somebody had filled all the reeds with music."

As for her, she was really thoroughly tired. She felt the truth of what she had said to him at parting, when he had asked whether she were inclined to dine with him. "One must not crowd too much into a single day." She glanced at her diary, and pushed it wearily away from her; but then with a change of purpose, for a moment or two she sat down before it, and hastily wrote on the page the following lines from Tennyson, with some blots, above and below it, meant to do duty for asterisks:

Across the hills and far away,  
Beyond their utmost purple rim,  
And deep into the dying day  
The happy princess followed him.

## CHAPTER XII.

THEY had made no plans for the following day, but he took it for granted that he should spend it with her somewhere and somehow; and he was pleased rather than surprised when, before ten o'clock, a note was brought to him from her, begging him to come to her instantly. He was surprised, however, as soon as he was in her presence; for her face and manner were full of trouble and agitation. "I have just," she said, "heard such dreadful news; and I can't at all tell what's the best thing to be done. The doctor—a very nice man, who has seen the children before—has just told me that scarlatina has broken out in Lichtenbourg—that three children have already died of it, and that there are two bad cases in the villa next the hotel. I want," she went on, "to be off without a moment's unnecessary delay; but I am so perplexed—I can't decide where to go. I might return to my aunt; but the children are never well at the castle; and of course we have our flat at Vienna; but Vienna, in this heat, would be death to them. Poor little things—they are both of them so delicate! And then," she added with a faint regretful laugh, "everything here was beginning to be so pleasant. Do help me—tell me what you advise."

Grenville's face while she was speaking, had shown as much concern as her own; but by the time she had

ended, its expression had changed suddenly, and he looked at her for a moment in silence, with a dawning smile.

"Can't you help me?" she said a little irritably. "To me this is really serious. I, whatever you may do, see in it nothing to smile at."

"I was smiling," he said, "at something you don't see; and that is a way, and an easy one, out of all your difficulties. Take your children to the Count's hotel in the forest."

The suggestion came to her like a burst of sunshine out of clouds. She drew her breath and clasped her hands with delight at it. But then, relapsing into despondency, she sighed, "The hotel's not open."

"No," urged Grenville, "but some of the rooms are ready; and we know the cook's there. No doubt they could take you in. If you'll let me, I'll order a horse, and ride over to arrange about it; and you meanwhile can take the opinion of the doctor."

She paused reflecting; then she looked at him inquiringly. "And what would you do?" she said. "Would you stay here? You couldn't—at least I suppose so—you couldn't very well come to the hotel."

"I," he said, "would go to the Count's hunting lodge. As I told you the other day, it is already as good as lent to me."

"It's too good of you," she murmured. "But how bored you would be shut up there!"

"As soon as I am," he answered, "I promise you I will go away. Only tell me—shall I ride over now and arrange things?"

"Yes; do what you can; and I shall be waiting for

your report anxiously. Don't be too long—not longer than you can help."

This parting injunction kept softly echoing in his ears, as his horse's hoofs rang on the road of yesterday; and he was back again, his mission accomplished before she had begun expecting him. The manager, he said, had been charmed at his prompt return, and more charmed still on finding out the reason of it. A suite of rooms with a lovely view of the lake, were perfectly ready at this moment for occupation; and though as yet there were only a few servants, there were still sufficient to wait upon one family. As for himself, Grenville had been at the lodge. The forester and his wife had heard from the Count that morning, that the English Excellency was to occupy it whenever it pleased him; and "By this time," he said, "they will be airing the sheets and dusting. If we go to-morrow afternoon we shall find everything prepared for us; and in case at the hotel there should be difficulty the first night about dinner, I have ordered something at six, for ourselves and for the children, at the lodge."

"I see," she said laughing, "you will have everything your own way; and as the doctor approves of the plan, we are all bound to be grateful to you. You must, too, arrange about the carriages. Our flight will be a regular exodus."

And indeed with the luggage and the servants, and the children, it seemed so. It was a journey slower than their first, and so far as scenery went, it could not offer them the excitement and charm of novelty; but they felt in it a novelty of some kind—they hardly could tell what; and though the place to which it was taking them

was still fresh in their memories, the life to which it was taking them had something in it that was hardly imaginable.

Columbus, when he landed first in the New World, could not have felt in his nerves the thrill of entire strangeness more keenly than they did, when they finally reached their destination. The halt of the three carriages at the wooden porch of the hotel, the bustle of the servants, the sorting of the luggage, the taking of hers indoors, and the dispatch of his to the lodge, seemed to them both like events that never had had a parallel. They inspected her rooms together, and admired their fresh daintiness; they went out on the balcony, and admired the lake and forest. The children were wild with delight, as if they had never before been happy; and the mother clapped her hands and laughed as happily as the children.

Then Grenville hurried off to the lodge, promising to return and bring them over to dinner. The gold of the warm evening shone and floated on the lake, when he did so an hour later, and when they went with him across the grass and the pine needles—the children in their red frocks, and their mother, with apologies to Grenville, showing the woodlands the cloak in which she had glittered at Lichtenbourg. The meal which they found awaiting them was a supper rather than dinner. There was fish from the lake, a chicken, and a variety of early vegetables. There was for the elders a slim bottle of hock, and an old German jug full of milk for the children. The mellow daylight was still bright enough for them to eat by; but some candles were burning, whose flames were like pale daffodils.



"When we were little," Mrs. Schilizzi said, "we had a game which we called 'pretending.' One could play it in many ways; but our favorite way was this. We put a tent we had on the back of an old donkey, and we walked away to a common at the back of the house. We pitched our tent, we encamped among the furze bushes, we lit a fire, and pretended we were Arabs in the desert. Those encampments have always seemed to me the remotest places in the world, and the hours we spent there the most adventurous life imaginable. I feel somehow as if we were playing at 'pretending' now." She said this when the meal was drawing to a close; and then she added presently, laughing into her children's eyes, "Now, children, there is another adventure in store for you. You must come back with mother a long, long way to bed, all across the grass and through the myrtle bushes, where the beautiful fairies play."

The children opened their eyes, and they were deep with the joys of imagination.

"Must we go yet?" said Grenville. "Won't you wait for our coffee?"

"No," she answered, laying her hand on his arm. "They are tired; it is very late for them. Get them their hats, and let us go. We will come back for our coffee."

As they went in the dusk, the children played among the bushes, constantly running up to their elders to ask where were the fairies; and Mrs. Schilizzi said, "Whenever a child sees them, they become shy and change themselves into glow-worms."

She and Grenville, when they went back to the lodge, drank their coffee by the window in almost complete

silence. Now and then one or other of them uttered a word or two; he offered her a biscuit; he asked her if she felt the draught; and once, unbidden, he rose and bent down over her, and folded her cloak a little more closely round her.

"Won't you smoke?" she said. "You look so natural when you are doing so."

By and by, between the floating puffs of his cigarette, he said abruptly, "We must know each other very well, I think."

She asked why? as if sure of the answer and yet waiting for it.

"Because we can sit like this," he said, "and talk without ever speaking."

For a time she made no response, except a look and a faint smile. But at last she rose from her seat, and said, "It is time to go." He expostulated, telling her it was early; and indeed it was only nine.

"Don't keep me," she said very softly and gently. "Let me go. If you like you can walk back with me."

They were both standing by this time, but both seemed withheld from moving. Suddenly she uttered a word, quite naturally, and as if she hardly knew she was using it; but it went through his whole being as if it had been a spell. It was simply his own name, "Bobby." He waited. Her head drooped pensively.

"There is something," she went on slowly, "that I want to tell you. You have been very good to me—you have taken great care of me."

Again she stopped. "This is all so new," she murmured. "It is like— No, I don't know what it's like. It's like nothing except itself—to me." Then, with a

sudden movement, she raised her head, came up to him, and put her hands on his coat. In the frank appeal of her eyes, in every look and gesture there was an absolute simplicity, as if her inmost self were expressing itself.

"Bobby," she said, lingering over the syllable in a whisper, "I want you to be always good to me—always. Tell me that you will be; tell me in my ear that you will be."

Her words seemed like the bleat of some forsaken animal. A silence followed, and only her eyes spoke. There was a trouble in them like the meeting of two conflicting waters. A moment later she had hidden her face in her hands, and when she removed them, in her eyes there were tears and happiness. He had uttered her as yet no word; but now looking half sadly at her, "Irma," he said, "I will be to you the best I am able to be. You are right, you must go now. Come, I will take you back."

If her day's journey had tired her, it had, at all events, not made her sleepy. A lamp stood on her table; her window was half open; a faint sound as of murmuring boughs came in through it; and before her, according to her custom, was the case that contained her diary. The last words she had written were the lines she took from Tennyson. Unity of style as a diarist was not her strong point certainly; nor did what she wrote now show any concern to make it so. It was hardly like a diary, indeed, except that it was prefaced by a date.

"To-night," she began, "if I am to express myself at all, I must express myself in a new way. I must address myself to something that is not myself, and that is beyond me. What this is I cannot tell, or, at all events,

I will not tell. I will not tell myself even. Its form and its nature shall remain vague, and I shall speak to it more freely. Listen then, you, whatever you are, to whom I am going to lay bare my thoughts, as the sea lays bare to the moon its hushed and yet troubled waves. I used when a child to read Ovid's "Metamorphosis," and I often amused myself by wondering how the people felt when they found themselves turning into trees and flowers and fountains. I think I can tell now, for I am undergoing the same sort of change myself.

"Power to whom I speak, into what am I changing? You will be able to see perhaps; but I want myself to tell you. Could I laugh about it—and why should I not? for one can always afford to laugh when one is quite sure one is serious—I would tell you that I felt like Aaron's rod, when it budded. As for Ovid, the bodies of his women turned into flowers. I feel like a flower turning into a woman's soul. Is not this vague? Tell me—can you catch my meaning? I wish to put it more plainly; and when I try to do so in my mind, do you know what happens? The sentences I shape to myself are metamorphosed like Ovid's heroines; and instead of speaking about myself, I find myself speaking about—what? About the warm silence of the night, about the stealing scents of the forest, that just make the edge of the thin lace curtains tremble, about the lapping of the lake, that I can just hear at intervals, as at intervals when one is half asleep, one can just hear one's watch tick. Yes, I feel inclined to tell you about all these things, instead of telling you—of confessing to you, about myself. But were I really talking to you, and could you hear my voice, I should betray myself in that;

you would hear my whole confession in it. Consider again. Is this a sign of anything? I write these sentences slowly, pausing between each and dreaming—dreaming as I watch the flames of the candles tremble, and little white drops of wax chase one another down their sides; and as I dream, with my pen balanced in my hand, all sorts of verses I have read come, like bees in summer, winging their way into my mind; and each comes laden with some new meaning, all my own—some pollen, some honey, some dew, out of the flower of life, as I myself have lived it.

“Can you imagine how a rose feels, when all its petals are unfolding? That is how I feel. I am unfolding toward you. Do you see what you have done for me? Ah, but that is not all the story. If you have done this for me, there is something I have done for you. Let me boast—let me rise in the air, on this sense of power. You—you who are so much stronger than I am, I have led you, I have influenced you: and listen; you know I have done this—I have opened your eyes, and you have seen in me what I never saw, but only dreamed of in myself, till you saw it; and now I am created anew. Since you have seen it, it is a reality.

“Shall I go further—shall I make another boast? If you would ever see what I am writing, I would not; but you never will, and so I will make it. Something—I know what it was: it was regard for me, for I saw that in your eyes—well, something has held you back from me, or held you up from me. I thought all the more of you for this; but I have made you stoop; my power has been more than yours. I have made you stoop till your lips have at last touched mine. And do you know how I did

it? I will remind you. I begged you—not in so many words, but you knew my meaning—I begged you, I prayed you, to keep away from me. And I meant it too. I have never lied to you. But there was something in me that meant something quite different, and meant it more strongly—at least I suppose so; for we now see the result. Perhaps I shall teach you what a strange thing a woman's heart is. Its motto, I think, ought to be, 'I am nothing if logical.'

"And yet, seeing that in all this some responsibility has been incurred somewhere, I don't mean to let you off, and say you are responsible for nothing. For do you know what you have done? I wonder, I wonder, if you do? You have entered my mind, you have moved among my thoughts, like a wind moving through a garden, and stealing into the flowers, and fluttering their petals. You have been where no human being has ever been before—not even I myself; and you have said to me, 'See these flower beds, see these flowers. You never knew, did you, that you had such things in your garden?' Why did you do this? You had no business to come there and wander there at all. But since you have come, do you know how I am going to punish you? I am going to keep you there. You never shall go away again.

"I began talking of you vaguely, as some impersonal power, and owing to a kind of shyness I thought of you vaguely; but by this time I think I have pretty well betrayed myself. And yet I can no more tell you now, than I could at the beginning, all that I want to tell you. Let the air of the night, which we both are breathing, breathe it to you; let the forest murmur it. Let the

lake, which is so near you, ripple it to you through your windows. Let me tell it to you myself, in telling you how I love my children. I feel sometimes as if nothing I could do for them, could ever satisfy what I feel for them; that they could never be close enough to my heart; that my life could never completely enough be spent for theirs. As the arms of a mother long to enfold her child, so, my friend, my companion, I long to enfold you!"

The following morning when she stepped out on her balcony, while a waiter inside was clattering as he arranged the children's breakfast, she murmured, feeling the freshness that seemed to pervade everything, "And the evening and the morning were the first day."

She presently looked toward the lodge, watching the slope in front of it; but she saw no one stirring; and a shadow—a very transparent shadow—of disappointment crossed her mind. "Does he like me," she said to herself, as she passed indoors. But the smile on her lips showed that she had little doubt about the answer.

At breakfast a packet was brought to her.

"What!" she exclaimed. "The post! I never thought that letters would follow me here so soon." But she saw, the next moment, that it was something which had come by hand; and she found, on undoing it, that it was a copy of Grenville's poems. She recollected now that she had asked him if he had a copy which he could lend her. He had said, "No"; but a line which he now inclosed ran thus: "By accident this was found in one of my boxes. I will come to you after breakfast. You have made me once more a poet." She turned over the pages with a placid, half-tender, interest; but all of

a sudden she started and blushed crimson. She had come to the fly leaf; and that showed her his meaning, when he spoke of being once more a poet. Her initials were written on it; and under her initials these lines:

What may I write that shall hint of my love for you?

My pen trembles idly, and doubts as it dips.

Teach me some name that is tender enough for you:

Or else hold me silent, my love, with your lips.

She read the lines over and over again, her lips slightly quivering. Then, pressing her hands, with the open book in them, close to her breast, as if feeling some sharp pain, but a pain contradicted by something shining in her eyes, "Oh, my friend," she murmured, "my beloved friend—speech is silver."



### CHAPTER XIII.

Mrs. SCHILIZZI remained for some time, with the book lying open in her lap, and her eyes fixed on the verses as if they were some strange flower. She had left the breakfast-table, and was sitting outside on the balcony, shielding her head from the sun with a large parasol, while a light breeze played with the soft tendrils of her hair. Her parasol and her dress were red; and as Grenville came presently over to the hotel from the hunting lodge, he saw her from far off, like one brilliant patch of color. She, however, did not see him, till he came to her through the window of the sitting-room, and the sounds of his steps roused her. She gave him her good-morning, except with her eyes. She looked up at him, her hand still resting on the book; and she merely said "How could you?" He returned her gaze, not with sadness exactly, but with gravity; and for a few moments both were silent. At last he said, "Are you angry with what I write? It was written before I knew what I was writing."

"No," she said, "not with it, but with myself for being made so happy by it."

Again they were both silent. At length, in an altered voice, "Tell me," he said, "what shall we do this morning? The manager tells me that he has a pony carriage, and also that there are roads in the forest—a little rough, but still fit for driving."

"Oh," she exclaimed, "let us drive!" And her face was like a sunlit sea from which the shadow of a summer cloud had floated. The carriage was ordered, and they drove off together, first for a little way skirting the borders of the lake, and then following the road, into the heart of the leaves and shadow. Active glancing lights were playing on all sides among the branches; birds sang, squirrels whisked their tails; and the white throat of a stoat confronted them, tame with wonder. Mrs. Schilizzi seemed to Grenville, as she sat beside him, to bear the same relation to the beauty and the happiness of nature, that an echo bears to a voice; and she filled his mental ear with a soft magical music. Every appreciation he shared with her, every passing laugh, was a new link uniting him to her, that was fashioned and fastened noiselessly.

Having driven for some way among pines, they at last reached a wood of beeches, where the undergrowth was cut into glades, evidently for the purposes of sport, and where the open ground was gleaming with moss and grasses. They left the pony in charge of a boy they had taken with them, and wandered away together through one of these inviting ways. By and by they seated themselves at the foot of a tree, she more flower-like than ever, in her red dress among the greenness, while her cheeks seemed, by contrast, like the petals of a pale geranium.

"Never," wrote Grenville afterward, addressing her in imagination, "never shall I forget that scene. After we had sat there for a moment or two, talking of I cannot remember what, you turned to me with a half mischievous laugh, and yet with something in your manner

•

that was serious, and you said to me, 'Bobby'—you said that slowly, as if you liked the word—'I should think you were a brother, if it were not for one thing; and that is, that I want to ask you a such a silly and vain question. Do you think I am pretty?' Irma, there was nothing of the coquette in you. You asked that question with such absolute simplicity, laughing at yourself just a little for asking it, that you made me absolutely simple in my answer. I said, 'I should, very likely, think so, if only you were anybody but yourself. As it is, I see not your face, but the meaning of it. Many hieroglyphics are very graceful in form, and so long as they are nothing but forms for us we, no doubt, think them pretty; but as soon as we learn to read them, we forget the prettiness of the letters, in thinking of the sense of the sentences.' And yet you were pretty, and I saw you were. Round your red dress through the mosses, blue flowers were sprouting, like tiny spires; and above you the young leaves of the beech trees were catching the sunlight on their tremulous transparent films; and we had for companions the hush and whisper of the forest, and the profound embowered solitude. . . .

"Irma, you turned over in your mind what I said to you, as if you were a little girl sucking a sugar plum, and thinking whether you liked it; and at last I saw that you did like it, and you said, 'I'm glad of that. I hate people who like me merely because I am pretty.' We were both satisfied; and for a little while we did nothing but pull up grasses and flowers, and ask each other if we knew their names. We are neither of us very good at botany. Presently you began to tell me of a place in a wood near your old home, where you used to go and hide

yourself with your books. There was a copy of Keats you used to take with you, and an 'As you Like It': and on one of them, I forget which, you had managed to spill some milk, and your brothers and sisters used to say of you, 'Irma is always so messy.' And you laughed as you told me this, and said, 'I am very clean now.' And then you began telling me one little anecdote after another about your early years, and all the atmosphere of your life's spring breathed about me. You seemed to be bringing out all your little treasures, and showing them to me one by one, with a child's simplicity mixed with a woman's humor; and with something more than this—with consciousness that to me you would never have thought of showing them, if you had not been confident that whatever was yours would interest me. There lay the magic of the moment, its subtle spiritual alchemy, transmuting so much within me.

"What trifles such things are! Any man not a fool can in some moods laugh at them; a fool can laugh at them in all moods indiscriminately; but no man not a fool will be afraid of his own laughter. Men who know life best, and whose sense of humor is keenest, know best that we should never find anything to be valuable if we valued only what we could never despise or laugh at. The serious things of life are of value only as settings for the things which in our practical moods we call trifles. Let me think of ourselves in that wood, and compare ourselves with some man of business, who has made at one stroke by his shrewdness some twenty thousand pounds. *There* is sense—*there* is seriousness, with a vengeance. Well, what does this good man do with his money? He buys for his wife some magnificent tiara of diamonds.

But what are these diamonds? Merely sparkling pebbles. Consider this: the reward of business is to look at some little pebbles twinkling. This is the pleasure of your shrewd practical man. What is that compared with my vision of you?

"Well, after you had talked to me of those enchanted trifles, you suddenly checked yourself, and you said to me, 'Look here, I am doing all the talking. I tell you everything, and you tell me nothing. It's your turn now. You must tell things to me.' I asked you what sort of things. You reflected a little; and then looking at me, Irma, with a persuasive gravity, you said, 'Tell me why Italy seemed a prosaic place to you.' I hesitated, for reasons which you know now. They concerned another woman; and the devotion and respect I felt for you, and my sense of how impossible it would be for me, under any circumstances, to discuss you with anyone else, gave me the same reverential feeling with regard to the woman I speak of. There seemed to be something wanting to justify me in even naming her. And yet I spoke the truth when I answered you, 'I should like to tell you, but it would take a long time.' And here, having mentioned time, I found an escape out of my difficulty. I pulled out my watch, and showed you how late it was. You started and laughed. 'Help me up,' you said; and as quick as our feet could carry us, we went to the pony carriage and returned. I lunched with you at the hotel. How well I remember the look of that meal. The brown crumpled skin of the children's rice pudding, and the clear blue shadows the dishes made on the table-cloth! I remember, too, saying, as we entered

the room together, 'So far as liking goes, I should like to tell you everything.'

'That evening, Irma, that evening, I did so.

'In the afternoon you had letters to write; so had I. You wrote yours in a summer house by the lake, with your children playing round you. I went to write mine in my own rooms. But write I could not. I could not concentrate my thoughts on the people I wanted to address, or the subjects I wanted to deal with. Between me and the paper your image would come; and five minutes after five minutes I found myself sitting motionless, occupied with it only. At last I gave the attempt up, and pushed my pen away from me. I longed to go back to you; but I thought it the kindest thing to give you one hour to yourself at all events; so I kept myself from you for all that weary time. I never knew before how long an hour could be, or how in an hour a sense of want could be developed in one, springing up like a tree that grows under the napkin of an Indian juggler. At the end of that hour I went to you, and found you still in the summer-house. 'Have you written your letters?' I asked. You pointed to two sheets of note paper, on each of which were scribbled a few lines, and which you began listlessly to put into their envelopes. 'I couldn't write,' you said. 'That is all I have done.' Irma, that pleased me. We had been going through the same experience. But when you said you were tired, and wanted to lie down for an hour in your room. 'Do you mind?' you asked me. Of course I said no; but owing to one of those wayward caprices of temper, which sometimes take the bit of reason in


their mouths, and carry off the imagination on their backs, I said to myself that you were tired because you were tired of me. Well—you went; and for another hour I was left alone. Fool that I was! I felt miserable, despised, deserted. I went roaming about, moving quickly, and treading as if I would tread time under my feet, still half angry with you, and still longing, and longing, and longing for you. The hour went by, and still you did not come. You had told me when you were rested you would come out on the balcony. ‘Come, come, come,’ I said, ‘and I will tell you everything. Every thought in my mind is longing to pour itself into yours.’ Suddenly it occurred to me that the old man at the lodge had shown me a boat house, with some boats belonging to the Count in it. An idea came to me. We would dine at the lodge at six, and I would row you on the lake afterward. This gave me at once an excuse for sending up a note to you. I longed to be in communication with you, even through a sheet of note paper. I turned toward the hotel, for at the time I was looking away from it, and there, Irma, I saw you sitting in the balcony. You waved your hand. I went; I believe I ran toward you. I was upstairs, I was by your side in a moment; and your smile showed me how foolish my bitter dreams had been, and that whatever had tired you, you were not tired of me. I told you of my plan for our dinner, and our boating. You assented with pleasure; and then you said, softly and musically, as if you hardly knew you were saying it, as if it were a thought that had become embodied accidentally, ‘Do you care for me? I thought just now that perhaps you were only amusing

yourself.' 'I will tell you,' I said, 'on the lake what will make you think otherwise.'

"We dined at the lodge—you and I and the children; and afterward you and I went floating out over the water. 'Well,' you said presently, 'what are you going to tell me?' I said I was going to answer you the question you had asked me about Italy. I said, too, that you must be patient, and let me answer you in my own way. I began my story like this, as no doubt you remember: 'Since the days when you did your geography lessons out of a schoolbook, I daresay you have forgotten the very name of the city of Vicenza. It is little talked about; few tourists visit it; and yet, in all northern Italy, there are few places more interesting. Its narrow streets, blinded with Venetian shutters, are full of old palaces, having carved and pillared fronts, and great arches under whose shadow you enter, passing through them into stately courts. There are pale marble staircases, hushed and mysterious, leading to saloons and halls, whose ceilings are dim with paintings, whose great hearths are surmounted with carvings and coats-of-arms, and whose walls are darkened with old tortoise-shell cabinets. The roadways are overhung with rows of antique balconies, whose iron railings are twisted into leaves and lyres. There is a theater built more than three hundred years ago, which still has on its stage some of its original scenery. Lamps at night twinkle before the images of saints. The neighborhood is full of ancient villas, embowered in gardens. There are churches everywhere, full of twilight and gilding; and stray scents of incense meet you as you come round corners. You would think it the very place



to dream in. Well—it was to Vicenza I went; and shall I tell you why I went there? It was to meet somebody to whom——,’ Irma, when I said this you started, and exclaimed in a breathless whisper, ‘Somebody whom you are going to marry?’ I said, ‘If you had asked me that question three weeks ago, I should have answered Yes! Wait a moment, and you will see how I answer it now.’ Little Irma, what a true woman you are! Do you remember how you leaned forward, and exclaimed, ‘Tell me her name. Who was she? I’m sure she was beautiful—and yet, no—I’m quite sure she was horrid!’ I told you who she was; and you said that she was very grand, and that she was this and that, and that I had better go and marry her; and then you said, ‘Well, go on. How did you fall in love with her?’ I told you. I described her, and how I had felt about her, and how I did feel when I went to meet her at Vicenza. Then I described our meeting. I described her pleasure on seeing me—a pleasure so frank and placid, and the kind of pleasure I felt in response to it; and then I went on in this way: ‘All that was good, and genuine, and intelligent in her, I recognized as clearly as ever, and the quiet high breeding that betrayed itself—or should I say hid itself? in every movement and gesture, and in every intonation of her voice. But, for some reason—I could not divine what—she seemed changed; she seemed faded; something seemed to have passed away from her; and I began to wonder what had been my condition of mind, when a girl like this could have tinged my dreams with rose color. Then we all of us began to explore the town. She and I were constantly apart from the others, and I tried to point out to her all the many things that touched



my own imagination, and perfumed the very air with interest. One point I soon found out. So far as mere facts went, she knew a great deal more about Vicenza than I did; and small wonder indeed, for, as it turned out presently, she had just been learning by heart the contents of two guide books. But as to the sentiment of the place, as to that strange, plaintive music that old things make in ears able to hear it—of this she knew nothing. I had been at Vicenza once before by myself. I found it delightful then; but now, as I went through it with her, the same thing seemed to have happened to this town that had happened, so far as I was concerned, with regard to herself. Both, somehow, were disenchanted. Do you know, after two days' sightseeing, how she summed up her impressions? Vicenza, she said, is very quaint and interesting, but it would be a dull little place to live in. No doubt that last statement may be true; but it affected me when she said it exactly as I should have been affected if she had been to witness some wonderful religious ceremony, and had nothing to say about it except that there were draughts in the cathedral. Well—and now let me tell you this. All the time that I was there going about with her, conscious of disappointment, even before I acknowledged it, memories kept echoing in my mind of another relic of the past—an old castle in a forest on the borders of Hungary, where iron balconies overhung a forest of beech trees, and where I stood with someone who was looking for something that never came. That day I seemed to have moved in music; and I felt that now by contrast I first knew its full charm. That day was summer; these were frost. That day I was at home; during these days I was an

exile. I was homesick, Irma, for our golden holiday. I didn't understand my feelings clearly then. I have learnt to do so since. I never said then to myself that the want in my life was you; but I began to find out, and to feel a secret relief in finding that candid as my friend was, there was nothing in her manner which need necessarily mean anything more than cordiality. She felt that she did not, at all times, quite understand me. I could see this; and I could see also that she found in the feeling very little to discompose her. Indeed, I think that in a gentle, cheerful way she was amused by it. In saying this, I seem to be saying so little. In reality, I am saying so much. It came to this—that I grew certain of two things. One was, that though, if I made an effort, I might secure her affection easily; if I did not make that effort, she would be very little of a sufferer. The other was, that the effort was one which I could not make. Things being in this condition, fate did me a kind turn. My friend's mother had a sister who was passing the spring in Florence. This lady fell more or less dangerously ill; and a telegram was suddenly received from her by her relations in Vicenza, which, at a moment's notice, took the whole party off. Our parting was cordial—nothing more. I was left alone, divided between a sense of relief and a sense that my future, which had lately showed a definite prospect, had all of a sudden melted into stormy clouds.' Just as I was saying this, Irma, you gave an exclamation. Some large raindrops had fallen, and turning your face to the sky, you said, 'We are going, I think, to have stormy clouds now.' We looked about us. The sky had become purple; the stars were steadfast above us, and were wavering below us in the faint depths of the

lake; but up from the west was floating a film of dusky vapor. Some more drops fell. We were not far from land, and we were both on shore before the real down-pour had begun. We hastened into the lodge, where my room was already lamp-lit. We sat down. For a short time we were silent, and I was doubtful how to take up the broken thread of my history. By accident your eyes fell on a photograph lying upon my writing-table. It was a photograph of an old house. You took it up and admired it. I said to you, 'It is mine; but soon I shall have to sell it.' 'Sell it!' you exclaimed; 'your old family place! If I had a place like that, I would sooner sell my life.' There was horror in your voice, and also something like contempt. 'Do you know,' I said, 'why I shall have to sell it? It is my life; but I am going to sell it for the sake of another life.' Then I told you all. I explained to you, that so far as my fortune went, all depended upon my projected marriage; that this marriage I now found impossible, and that I found it impossible for a reason which I at last recognized—that reason being yourself. You looked at me as if you could hardly believe my words, and you drew a long breath, the sound of which I can hear now. You were sitting on a sofa, 'Bobby,' you said, and you could hardly speak for emotion, 'is this true? Come, sit by me here, and tell me so.' A little later on, you were saying this: and you spoke gasping. 'How can I be glad when you tell me I am ruining your fortunes? Is not this selfishness—the very madness of selfishness? And yet—and yet—oh, Bobby, you overwhelm me. No one has ever understood me, or ever loved me till now. I never thought that for my sake anyone could give up anything.'"

## CHAPTER XIV.

IN the gray of the morning Grenville woke, with a dull sense weighing on him that a vague something had happened, which he shrank from looking at, and, when looked at, would change him in his own eyes. What was the life, the condition, the course of action, to which he now at last had definitely and passionately committed himself? And to what also had he committed her by the passion he had roused, and which he now knew to be so serious?

He moved to get up; but that would be to face realities; and he had not courage for the effort. He did so at last, however; his will rallied its strength. He hastily put some clothes on, muffling himself in his great coat. He softly unlocked the door, and he went out. The sky was a field of dim moving fleeces, damp as Gideon's, and so was the lake as well. All the ground was spongy and gray with dew. Nothing about him stirred but a slow and silent breeze, which just laid on his cheeks the touch of the weeping air. He looked blankly round him. In spite of its strange aspect everything spoke of her. He thought of their drive of yesterday, and the meeting of their sympathies in the sunshine; and then he started as his eyes rested on the hotel. Had it not been for that, yesterday might have been years ago; but that was a witness of her actual neighborhood, as it slept with its closed white curtains, and its wet tiles glimmer-

ing. His eyelids were heavy still; his head ached. How, he asked himself, would she meet him? Or would she meet him at all? Perhaps, he thought, his devotion would by this time seem to her to be an insult, and she would merely send him a letter, telling him coldly never to see her again. He looked at his watch. It was only five o'clock. Hours must pass before he could have any news of her.

Close to the lodge was a little patch of garden. There were some white roses in it, and some red tulips. He picked a bunch of these, and arranging them very carefully, went indoors, and put them in a tumbler of water. The cold air was now making him sleepy. He sought his bed again, and slept till Fritz awoke him. He made Fritz tie the flowers together, and told him to take them at once to Mrs. Schilizzi, and ask if she had caught cold owing to last night's rain. "If she wishes not to see me," he thought, "she will send back word to say so. I shall escape the humiliation of finding her door closed." He waited, miserably impatient, for the return of Fritz. He waited for half an hour. At last a message came to say that she was quite well, and would hope to see him soon after ten o'clock. Along with the message came a small scrap of paper, with this scrawled on it—"How good of you! what lovely flowers."

The words operated like a charm on him. A load fell from his heart. He realized that his coffee was at his bedside. He drank it, and rose instantly. He dressed with a hurried eagerness, and turned his steps to the hotel. As he approached it, his heart again sank, and his hand trembled as he knocked at the door of her sitting-room.

He entered; she was at breakfast with her children, and some of his flowers were in the breast of her red dress. She looked full at him; there was no reproof in her face; and her voice still had its laugh like the ripple of a brook in spring time. The only change in her—and, indeed, there was a change—was the growth in her eyes and smile of a clearer and more earnest affection.

"I see," he said, by way of saying something, "that Fritz has brought you my flowers."

"Yes," she said, pointing him to a chair at the table. "I know, too, why you sent them. Sit down and have some coffee with us. Olga, get him a cup."

Grenville declined. "Won't you?" she said. "You look tired."

"Do I?" he said; "I've been thinking."

"Yes," she replied; "so have I—thinking about many things. Come outside on the balcony. The children can finish by themselves. Tell me," she said, in a whisper, as soon as they were alone together, "do you mean what you said last night? You mean really that you will give your life to mine?"

Grenville looked at her in silence, as if vainly seeking for words: at last he said slowly, "I don't want to use exaggerated language."

She gave a gasp, as if a knife had wounded her. "Ah!" she exclaimed. "Then you were only laughing at me—tell me?"

"I don't want," he repeated, "to use exaggerated language; but I believe I am not exaggerating; I tell you that I would willingly die for you."

He was surprised himself, at the almost bald intensity which he heard in his own voice as he quietly said this.

The effect on her was like that of the sun reflecting itself in water. The returning smile on her lips, and the trusting affection in her eyes, which, deep as it was, seemed as if yet it were but half unfolded, filled him with something which would have been overwhelming happiness, if he had not, in consequence of his recent trouble and suffering, felt it as rather the blessing of overwhelming peace.

And yet, through all this, though he was scarcely conscious of the fact, some part of her was a disturbing and perplexing riddle to him—a riddle, however, which she herself could have answered, could she only have confessed herself to him as she did that day to her diary. For although she had calmed him, yet in a certain way she shocked him. He had feared she would have suffered too much. It seemed as if she had suffered nothing. But she, too, like him, had been face to face with self; and had confronted conscience with a braver face than he had, although she had expected an even keener wound from it. This, however, it is true, she had not experienced, and the cause was, not, indeed, the greater intensity, but the greater simplicity of her own emotion, and a certain moral fortitude greater than his, which it had endowed her with. What she wrote in her diary was as follows:

“In connection with a step I have taken, my own impression of myself is most vivid. One often reads imaginary stories of a soul’s surprise after death at its own new condition, so wholly different from what was expected. I am like such a soul. Nothing has happened to me which, according to tradition, was sure to have happened. I have crossed a chasm into which I



was sure to have fallen, bruising and crushing myself among the rocks; but something has borne me up—has carried me through the air. I am neither soiled nor injured. If I were I would confess it. I thought when I woke I must be; and expected every moment to find myself a spiritual wreck. As a fact, however, I found myself whole. Why should I pretend otherwise? I will pretend nothing. I ought to feel degraded; that may be—but I don't. I can say no more than that. And yet I can—I can say this. If I fail to feel what the occasion is supposed to demand, it is not from callousness. Were I really degraded, surely I should know the sign of it. I should feel unworthy of doing or of thinking anything good; my eyes would flinch from the thought of ideal goodness; and somehow and somewhere I should be hardened. But I am conscious of nothing of this kind. No—no. On the contrary, never has affection, or the sense of goodness and beauty filled my heart so full as they fill it now. My children to-day are more dear to me than ever. The desire for self-sacrifice, the desire for prayer, trouble me, and are ever in my heart. Even toward Paul my feelings have an unwonted gentleness; and it seems to me that to him I could give a more dutiful service, because I have found someone to whom I can give myself. I am not deceiving myself. I can distinguish good from evil; and my good thoughts and my pure thoughts—I knew them as my guardian angels. After the step I had taken, I feared they would have deserted me; but I look about me, and they keep me company still—as near me as ever, as much mine as ever."

Such then being her condition in her own eyes, what pos-

sessed her now was a sense not of abasement or trouble, but of exaltation. It was a sense not of a lost, but rather of a transfigured, universe; and Grenville's spirit adjusted itself under the direction of hers, as though it were stronger than his own.

"Bobby," she said to him, "I wish to be quiet this morning. We will come into the summer house, and you shall read to me."

He did so. There was beatitude in obeying her smallest wishes. He was not himself particularly in a mood for reading; but he found that this, for a reason which soon became more clear to him, did but add to the zeal of his obedience. Before luncheon, as they went back to the hotel, he picked up a broken flint, and with a laugh put it into her hands.

"Do you think that pretty?" he said. "Don't you? I wish you did."

"Why?" she asked.

"Because," he said, "if it would only give you pleasure, I would sit all day long and break stones for you."

After luncheon, she was tired and lay down; and he went away for an hour or so, in order to leave her quiet. He walked restlessly about the borders of the lake; and removed from her presence, the charm of which seemed to protect him, the first bitterness of his morning's mood revived in him; and when he went back to her, something had begun to stir in him, though he did not dare to recognize it, that was like anger against her. He did his utmost to disguise from her his changed condition: and his voice recovered its tenderness, but he could not recover his spirits. They had arranged to take the children for a walk among the shadows of the forest; and

to dream in. Well—it was to Vicenza I went; and shall I tell you why I went there? It was to meet somebody to whom—,’ Irma, when I said this you started, and exclaimed in a breathless whisper, ‘Somebody whom you are going to marry?’ I said, ‘If you had asked me that question three weeks ago, I should have answered Yes! Wait a moment, and you will see how I answer it now.’ Little Irma, what a true woman you are! Do you remember how you leaned forward, and exclaimed, ‘Tell me her name. Who was she? I’m sure she was beautiful—and yet, no—I’m quite sure she was horrid!’ I told you who she was; and you said that she was very grand, and that she was this and that, and that I had better go and marry her; and then you said, ‘Well, go on. How did you fall in love with her?’ I told you. I described her, and how I had felt about her, and how I did feel when I went to meet her at Vicenza. Then I described our meeting. I described her pleasure on seeing me—a pleasure so frank and placid, and the kind of pleasure I felt in response to it; and then I went on in this way: ‘All that was good, and genuine, and intelligent in her, I recognized as clearly as ever, and the quiet high breeding that betrayed itself—or should I say hid itself? in every movement and gesture, and in every intonation of her voice. But, for some reason—I could not divine what—she seemed changed; she seemed faded; something seemed to have passed away from her; and I began to wonder what had been my condition of mind, when a girl like this could have tinged my dreams with rose color. Then we all of us began to explore the town. She and I were constantly apart from the others, and I tried to point out to her all the many things that touched

my own imagination, and perfumed the very air with interest. One point I soon found out. So far as mere facts went, she knew a great deal more about Vicenza than I did; and small wonder indeed, for, as it turned out presently, she had just been learning by heart the contents of two guide books. But as to the sentiment of the place, as to that strange, plaintive music that old things make in ears able to hear it—of this she knew nothing. I had been at Vicenza once before by myself. I found it delightful then; but now, as I went through it with her, the same thing seemed to have happened to this town that had happened, so far as I was concerned, with regard to herself. Both, somehow, were disenchanted. Do you know, after two days' sightseeing, how she summed up her impressions? Vicenza, she said, is very quaint and interesting, but it would be a dull little place to live in. No doubt that last statement may be true; but it affected me when she said it exactly as I should have been affected if she had been to witness some wonderful religious ceremony, and had nothing to say about it except that there were draughts in the cathedral. Well—and now let me tell you this. All the time that I was there going about with her, conscious of disappointment, even before I acknowledged it, memories kept echoing in my mind of another relic of the past—an old castle in a forest on the borders of Hungary, where iron balconies overhung a forest of beech trees, and where I stood with someone who was looking for something that never came. That day I seemed to have moved in music; and I felt that now by contrast I first knew its full charm. That day was summer; these were frost. That day I was at home; during these days I was an

unreasonable, and that I show to so little advantage by the side of your former lovers."

She started in horror, and looked at him, as if she could hardly believe her ears.

"How can you," she gasped, "say a thing like that to me!" Her eyes held him motionless. They at once petitioned and judged him. They slowly filled with tears, and he saw that her lips trembled. Instead of reproaching him she helplessly leaned toward him, and resting her arm on his knee, explored his face wistfully. "Bobby," she said, "you shouldn't treat me like that. For your sake I have taken off my armor, and now you are stabbing me, after you have made me defenseless. Tell me—what is it? Why do you think bad things of me?"

He tried to explain. He did so very lamely; but she realized that he was reminding her of something she had said about "other men."

"I'm not perfect," she said, "I know that. I would willingly tell you all there is to tell; but it's not much. I've been interested in other men—yes, I have been interested; but that's all. Do you believe me? You must. It is the entire truth. I don't quite know," she continued, "what you are thinking about me. I have seen so much less than you. I believe I'm so much simpler."

"Irma," he said, "Irma, are you?"

"I think so. From you, at least, I have nothing I wish to hide; and you are the only person to whom I can say that, or ever could have said it. Once—yes, I must confess this—I thought I could have loved one man; but I didn't; and no man, not even that one, has

ever so much as held my hand. Bobby—you must believe me.”

Disbelief was impossible. He was conquered: he showed her that he was so. Her voice slowly changed to a happy murmur, which still suggested tears, but tears with a rainbow spanning them.

“I was like a dog,” she said, “that had been beaten all its life. I trusted in you; and you were more cruel than anyone.”

The words sounded like a reproach, but really they were the seal of a reconciliation. She seemed to be giving the keys of her heart into his hands—to be placing herself wholly at his mercy. Her soul lay before him as if it were clear water; he was filled by the sense of how wholly her whole being was his; and he felt that their union had been but half complete till now. The wood, which a moment ago had been chilled with gloom and bitterness, was once more full of sunshine and moss-scented air and flowers. This pair, lately so taciturn, sent out their voices to the children; and the laughter of the children, which answered them, was hardly more gay than theirs.

All through dinner that evening enchantment hung in the air. In the warm dusk afterward the children played among the glow worms; and then, when the nurse came out, calling them and telling them it was bedtime, Grenville and his companion again committed themselves to the boat, and noiselessly glided off together into the peace between the sky and water.

The boat was commodious, and Grenville, when he had rowed some way, shipped his oars and seated himself by his companion. They hardly for a time felt any

need for talking. They each trusted the other to think and to brood in silence, each knowing that each was being taken into the other's life. All nature conspired to assist the process, touching them through their ears and eyes. Over their hearts was the cool of the immeasurable twilight. Stars were showing themselves—the immemorial friends of lovers; a young moon glittered like liquid silver. All around, the forests, softly dim and mysterious, guarded the lake, as they rose above their own reflections; and down in the depths below were the horns of the floating crescent.

In Grenville's mind what was taking place was this: An element in his devotion which had already made itself felt, but the nature of which he had hardly understood clearly, even when he had been most moved by it and had given it intermittent expression, was now coming to the surface, definite and recognizable, and growing in power as it did so. This was a longing which his passion had to express itself, not only in the enjoyment of her society, but in suffering for the sake of enjoying it. It was a feeling in some way resembling that of David, when he would not make an offering of that which had cost him nothing. Of its full meaning Grenville was not even now aware; but he knew this much, that one part of its meaning was a longing to prove to her and himself as well how intense this passion was, and to glorify it by the witness of self-sacrifice. "I would break stones for you, I would die for you." These had been fragments of the liturgy which was now inwardly completing itself. The mind became conscious of its own emotional changes mainly by means of a species of picture writing—a swift phantasmagoria of images, of

metaphors and analogies. Grenville felt his passion to be mounting on wings, beating the dusk on its way heavenward, and taking her with him. And now, too, his condition flashed on him another unexpected facet. For the first time in his life he realized in his own experience how matter and spirit are capable of being fused together, how the body can rise with the soul instead of weighing it down, and how instead of dying it can be changed.

At last he said to her, "Let me breathe in your ear something. If every husband loved his wife as well as I love you, marriage would indeed be a sacrament, and earth long ago would have been heaven. If our love is degradation, there is no elevation possible."

"Bobby," she said, "why do you fret yourself? I know that my soul is living—now for the first time. You say you would die for me. My wish is to live for you."

She had arrived at the same self-knowledge as he had; only he had reached it gradually, by a conscious and difficult progress, through opposing prepossessions, which had to be met and reasoned with. To her, everything, though strange, had been entirely simple. She had not reasoned about sacrifice, or flesh, or spirit. Her thoughts were lost in him; she had ceased to busy them with herself. She only remembered herself, when his words had reminded her of it; and later on, when again they had reached the shore; and when, by and by, the doors of the hotel received her, she hardly knew that her feet had touched the earth, or that her cheeks were like fluttered rose petals.

Days and evenings now passed on without their counting them, varying little in respect of outward incidents, but witnessing, so far as the consciousness of Grenville



and his companion were concerned, the formation of a new world either of reality or of illusion. Which it was, they had to learn by experience. Its formation was an experience in itself. From the first moment of his regarding her with any attention, he had not only felt her temperament to be attractive to his own, but he had discovered, under a misleading manner, that her intellect was active, and that her knowledge, though it was scattered, was curiously extensive. He now learnt how her education had been the work solely of herself. No guiding hand had been ever held out to help her. She had been the lonely sower of seed in her own soul; and some of the seeds had sprung up like wild flowers; others had hardly sprouted; and others, perhaps most, were sleeping. On these his thoughts seemed to descend like rain; and ground before that looked barren, began to grow green with life.

The precise nature of their relationship, and what might be its future consequences, never troubled them farther by presenting itself as a perplexity. They were insulated for the time from all external circumstances; and their life together appealed to their inner judgment only on its own merits as related to themselves only. In this isolated world, scrutinize it as they might, there was nothing to rouse in either of them any moral misgiving. Everything that either had imagined as spiritually or intellectually beautiful seemed to be sprouting and growing, and fulfilling itself. They seemed to be witnessing the days and dawn of a New Creation, and whatever they looked upon seemed to be "very good."

One night, however, in the boat, she said to him, after a long pause, during which her eyes had been fixed on

the clouds and stars, "I wonder if—supposing people could see us—people, I mean, that the world describes as *good*—" She hesitated, and then went on, trying a different form of expression, "I mean," she said, "that, supposing we were not ourselves, I sometimes wonder how I myself should judge us."

"If you were not one of ourselves," he said, "you would, perhaps, judge us hardly, and the reason would be that you would necessarily judge us wrongly. The imaginary history which the world, if it looked, would make of us, would be a thing very different—how grotesquely different! from the reality. What are the thoughts that I, Irma, have offered you? Have I ever breathed to you one that was impure or shameful? Have I ever breathed to you one that was not half-brother to a prayer? My passion for you is worship, and my whole being is cleansed by it."

"Stop, stop," she said. "No, go on; go on. Do you remember what you told me once, that for people who loved truly you believed the heavens were opened as truly as they were for Stephen? Look up; look up. It seems as if they were opened now."

"Irma, Irma, can this indeed be living? It seems to me to be of so much more than life. See the depth above us, and the depth reflected under us holding endless space, and all the endless ages, and ourselves like a ball of thistle down floating between two eternities. Where that milky light is are new universes forming themselves—the book of their genesis yet remains to be written. From some of these stars the arrows that to-night reach us started on their vibrating way before Eve's foot was in Eden. Think of the worlds forming, think of the

was sure to have fallen, bruising and crushing myself among the rocks; but something has borne me up—has carried me through the air. I am neither soiled nor injured. If I were I would confess it. I thought when I woke I must be; and expected every moment to find myself a spiritual wreck. As a fact, however, I found myself whole. Why should I pretend otherwise? I will pretend nothing. I ought to feel degraded; that may be—but I don't. I can say no more than that. And yet I can—I can say this. If I fail to feel what the occasion is supposed to demand, it is not from callousness. Were I really degraded, surely I should know the sign of it. I should feel unworthy of doing or of thinking anything good; my eyes would flinch from the thought of ideal goodness; and somehow and somewhere I should be hardened. But I am conscious of nothing of this kind. No—no. On the contrary, never has affection, or the sense of goodness and beauty filled my heart so full as they fill it now. My children to-day are more dear to me than ever. The desire for self-sacrifice, the desire for prayer, trouble me, and are ever in my heart. Even toward Paul my feelings have an unwonted gentleness; and it seems to me that to him I could give a more dutiful service, because I have found someone to whom I can give myself. I am not deceiving myself. I can distinguish good from evil; and my good thoughts and my pure thoughts—I knew them as my guardian angels. After the step I had taken, I feared they would have deserted me; but I look about me, and they keep me company still—as near me as ever, as much mine as ever."

Such then being her condition in her own eyes, what pos-

essed her now was a sense not of abasement or trouble, but of exaltation. It was a sense not of a lost, but rather of a transfigured, universe; and Grenville's spirit adjusted itself under the direction of hers, as though it were stronger than his own.

"Bobby," she said to him, "I wish to be quiet this morning. We will come into the summer house, and you shall read to me."

He did so. There was beatitude in obeying her smallest wishes. He was not himself particularly in a mood for reading; but he found that this, for a reason which soon became more clear to him, did but add to the zeal of his obedience. Before luncheon, as they went back to the hotel, he picked up a broken flint, and with a laugh put it into her hands.

"Do you think that pretty?" he said. "Don't you? I wish you did."

"Why?" she asked.

"Because," he said, "if it would only give you pleasure, I would sit all day long and break stones for you."

After luncheon, she was tired and lay down; and he went away for an hour or so, in order to leave her quiet. He walked restlessly about the borders of the lake; and removed from her presence, the charm of which seemed to protect him, the first bitterness of his morning's mood revived in him; and when he went back to her, something had begun to stir in him, though he did not dare to recognize it, that was like anger against her. He did his utmost to disguise from her his changed condition: and his voice recovered its tenderness, but he could not recover his spirits. They had arranged to take the children for a walk among the shadows of the forest; and

which I have to be consulted—and—more important still—for which they require my signature.” She showed Grenville the letter, and explained what she understood of the case to him. In spite of the rude break which it would make in their present existence, he saw that for her own sake it was really well that she should go; and he pointed out to her what she had not at first realized—that the whole business could be settled within a week. “Leave the children here,” he said, “and ask the Princess to come to them; and before ten days are over you can easily be back again.”

“And you?” she said, “what will you do?”

“I will come to England also. Who knows but that my letters may also contain a summons? I had but six weeks of freedom, and four have already gone.”

For a little while she was silent, lost in perplexed thought.

“I feel,” she said at last, “as if we had been sailing in a boat of dreams, and were now, with all that belongs to us, being lost upon the rocks of reality.”

“Nonsense,” said Grenville, with a vigor which approached roughness, but which brought to her, for that very reason, a certain sense of comfort. “If you and I are only realities to one another, we shall find that it is not our boat which is the dream, but the rocks, which you fear will wreck it. I will go to the lodge and look at my own letters; and when I come back, you shall see me in the character of a practical man.”

There was every need, he found, for at once redeeming his promise. It is true that none of his letters was an absolute summons to return; but there were among them two important communications which made him see

that his instant return would be desirable. One was from his man of business, the other from the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Both of them were serious enough in themselves; but quite apart from the actual news contained in them, they brought him face to face with a number of practical problems which he had known for the past week would ask now for a new solution, but which had till this moment seemed more or less vague and distant. All of a sudden they became close and tangible, and disclosed to him, as they did so, all sorts of troubling details. Returning to Mrs. Schilizzi he discussed their immediate movements. A messenger was dispatched to Lichtenbourg, who would go from thence to the Princess, taking a letter to her, and returning that night with an answer; and so soon as arrangements could be made for the proper care of the children, Mrs. Schilizzi would start, by way of Vienna, for England. At first it was assumed that Grenville would travel with her; but suddenly, with a doubtful smile, she said to him:

"Do you think you ought to? Perhaps I am foolishly nervous. I know the world so little, and I never before had occasion to be nervous at all. You must say what is best for me. I trust everything to you."

"Irma," he answered earnestly, "I need hardly tell you this; you already are sure enough of it. Were it not for external circumstances, I would never for a moment leave you. Every hour of my life I would be at your side caring for you. But in this case it may be best that we go separately—for part of the way at least. Let me think it over by myself, as I put my own things in order. My own things!" he repeated as he prepared

to go back to the lodge. "How wretched to think that my things are for a moment separate from yours!"

As soon as he was alone he set himself to consider the situation. With regard to the journey he judged it best on the whole that he should precede her to Vienna, where he would meet her and her maid, and go from there in the Orient Express to Paris with them. In this way he would avoid meeting the Princess, who, since he had reached Vicenza, had heard nothing of his movements; and who, if she arrived promptly, as she might very possibly do, would be startled at finding him where he was in close attendance on her niece.

"How much happier"—the thought came like a cloud—"how much happier life would be, were there nothing in it that required concealing! Anyone, up till now, would have been welcome to find me anywhere. And yet," he continued, "we all of us have our burdens. Let me make the best of this one by the way in which I accept its pain."

Then with a sigh he let these reflections pass, to take up their lodging in some dim chamber of his mind; and others succeeded them, in certain respects more formidable, but yet of a kind which he faced with a better heart. These, but not the former, he recorded carefully in his diary.

"A man of an imaginative temperament," he wrote—"I have always thought this—may fill his mind with visions of the deepest and loftiest feelings, the tenderest sympathies, the purest principles, and acts of complete self-sacrifice; and connecting himself with these by an act of the imagination, just as he might connect himself with a character in a poem or novel, he will seem to

himself to be a fine and sublime person, when he is in reality selfish and mean and heartless. Am I myself a person of that kind? If so, good God, to what a depth I must have sunk now! For nothing can justify me in my present condition but the fact that I am what I think I am—the fact that I mean my feelings. Do I mean them? Now comes the time for testing them; and I welcome the test. Suddenly, during the last fortnight, that strange catastrophe has befallen me, which when happening in the sphere of religion, is commonly called *conversion*. A something which I had always considered as something of secondary value has bewildered me by showing itself as the one treasure in life, and for the sake of securing this—so I have told my soul—I have already sacrificed much, and am prepared to sacrifice everything. But what I have sacrificed thus far has been merely certain scruples, which I have indeed respected throughout my life till now, and which I have certainly violated not without a pang; but so long as one's sacrifices are merely at the expense of one's scruples, they can hardly be accepted as much evidence of one's sincerity. I have felt this all the time. Again and again I have said to her, 'What I long to do is to suffer for you.' And my meaning I am sure has been—though I did not at first perhaps understand it fully—that I longed to convince myself of my own absolute sincerity—to convince myself that I was offering her my truth, and not my falsehood. Well, sooner than I thought, and more completely than I thought, the real trial has come. I see now that if I am genuinely devoted to her, if in any serious and self-denying way I mean to make my life the companion and support of hers, I shall have to sacrifice many things



besides scruples. I told her that owing to her I should have to sell my property; and I knew when I said so that this was true. But I thought little—indeed I had hardly time to think of all that my words meant. I realize what they mean now. I have received a letter informing me that an offer for the whole property has just been made of a kind unexpectedly liberal. My lawyer tells me that if I am to sell at all, now is my lucky moment; and indeed I can well believe him. Such an offer would probably never be made again. I might have to sell on terms that would leave me a beggar. These will, at all events, make me sure of a competence. I must decide within three weeks. Within three weeks! so soon to part with everything! I feel like a prisoner who hears that to-morrow is the day of his execution. How near it is all coming! And a fortnight ago the entire prospect was different. Then, instead of selling my home, I saw before me the redemption of it. I saw life and honor returning to the old disconsolate rooms. And now it must all go; it must pass away like a shadow, pictures, furniture, everything, with some few exceptions. And why? For the sake of what? Is it not for the sake of a shadow? a shadow, a dream, a fancy of which the very memory will soon be unintelligible? If that were the case, I am certain at least of one thing; I should look on myself as a creature beneath even my own contempt. But it is no dream, no shadow, the thing for which I shall make this sacrifice. I know it was not. I knew that the feelings within me—the longing, the joy, the worship, the self-devotion—I knew that all these were no mere idle sentiment, but that for better or worse they were part of my very self. And now I am

---

about to prove that my self-knowledge was true. Can my love be unreal, if I give up so much for it? Can it be selfish, if for her sake I am leaving all?

"I talk about *all*. I don't mean my property only. That is something; but I shall have to leave more than that. I think so, at all events; and at all events I am prepared to leave it. It is my new career that I am referring to. That would take me to Constantinople, and part me from her for an undetermined period. Irma, for those who are united as you and I are, there must be no separation such as this. Let me keep as near to you as I may, we shall be separated often enough. How often I cannot tell. The difficulties of our future till this morning were mere abstractions to me; and for the first time they are showing themselves as hard realities. They may be more, or they may be fewer than I anticipate; but be they what they may, I promise you this faithfully—there shall never be a day or an hour which I could possibly give to you, and which I will fail to give you, on account of what it may cost myself. The kind old man who would have acted so liberally to me about my marriage—the minister who has taken so friendly an interest in my advancement—to both of these I shall have to explain myself somehow; how I hardly know. I shall have, without the delay of a needless day, to let the authorities know that they must not reckon on my services. It will be difficult. There will be difficulties everywhere. And yet, what am I? I am so mad or so inspired—I have so completely lost my reason, or so completely found my soul—that all these difficulties, even while they fret and perplex me, and put an end to these weeks stolen from heaven, are at the same time fill-

ing me with exultation, and in every pang they inflict, are saying to me 'You are true to her.'"

He wrote this that morning, before rejoining her at luncheon; and he felt, having done so, more at peace with himself. Of the thoughts he had recorded he said little to her; but she felt in his manner a certain new quality which touched her, and soothed her, and gave her an added trust in him. He told her the conclusion he had come to, with regard to their journey; and though she winced at the idea of leaving him even for a day, she agreed that his plan was wise; and in the course of the afternoon she said to him, "If I liked you less, I should be more unhappy at parting from you; but the more I know you, the more of you enters into my soul, and will still remain with me, even when you are absent. Listen to me. I trust you. These are three short words; but all that is best and strongest in a woman's passion is implied in them."

Late that night the messenger who had been sent to the Princess returned with a letter from her, full of all sorts of kindness. She said, however, that to come to the hotel in the forest was an adventure beyond her strength; and she begged that, in their mother's absence, the two children might be sent back to the castle. "In fact," she added, "unless you telegraph to the contrary, I will meet you at Lichtenbourg to-morrow, in the middle of the day, and receive them straight from your hands, as you are on your way to Vienna."

"In that case," said Grenville, "I will be gone to-morrow, at cock-crow. I shall have the start of you by a few hours only. You will reach Vienna at midnight. I will call on you, at your apartments, next morning;

and that same afternoon we will start together for Paris."

They dined that evening at the lodge, without the children. "In thirty-six hours," she said, "I shall again be with you; but still, since we have been known and belonged to one another, this is our first good-by. Will you think me doubting and fretful if I ask you one thing? Are you sure you will be mine always?" There was a gentle solemnity both in her voice and look, which produced the sensation in him of being bound afresh to her—bound by a new link which was indeed unnecessary, but the added pressure of which he felt and received with gratitude. As he walked back with her to her door, she clung to his arm like a child, being taken to school, and about to be parted from its parent. The starlight showed on her cheeks something that gleamed like dew; and as she hid them and dried them in her sleeve, she murmured "I want never to leave you."

Grenville had to start by four o'clock in the morning. The sinking moon still shone as he dressed himself; but none of the lights of day were yet busy among the eastern clouds. The lamps of the carriage he was to travel in were staring with their nocturnal eyes; and he drove off behind the four jangling horses, feeling as if all the world were from henceforward to be night. Knowing that the sight would pain him, he turned to watch the hotel, as a man whose tooth is aching cannot resist touching it; and a desolating sense filled him, that though she would be soon restored to him, the conditions of their perfect union were done with, were lost forever. The mysterious forests, at first saturated with the darkness, and then as the wan dawn touched them yielding

it up like an exhalation, would at any other time have charmed and aroused his fancy. But now every mile of the road meant to him one thing only—a return from Eden, into the forgotten troubles of life. Lichtenbourg, with its hotels and gardens, as he reached it in the ashy twilight, desolated him with vivid memories of his first days of acquaintance with it. Those days as he saw them now, were colored with the light of what succeeded them. They were vivid with hope and promise; but they were past, and their promise seemed vain. Horses were changed at the Hotel Imperiale, where he had stayed. The front doors were closed; but his mind through the shuttered glass saw the gleam of a certain brown hat and dress, which had appeared to him on the sunny morning of a day that fluttered with cherry blossoms. “Irma! Irma!” he constantly muttered to himself as he waited; and then presently the horses were put to; and whatever he muttered further, the bells and the wheels drowned it. When he reached the railway station he experienced another shock. His life of late had been so removed from the world and had given time such a new and expanded value, that though hardly a fortnight ago he had arrived at this very place, a train seemed as strange to him as if he had not seen one for years; and the musty smell which came from the red plush cushions of his compartment seemed to him the breath of our common unprofitable life. This journey to Vienna he compared dreamily with his last, when his mind was perplexed with thoughts about Lady Evelyn, stimulated with thoughts of his own brilliant prospects, and troubled—little as he at the time knew it—by her under whose influence all these prospects would evap-

orate. "I can hardly believe," he reflected, "all that has happened to me in a fortnight. All those interests I had meant to live for, and even the very world that holds them, I have already resolved to sacrifice, and am now on my way to do so. I can hardly imagine the value I once set on them. On the other hand, the thing which I value now, and for the sake of which I am renouncing everything else, is a pearl hid in a field which I flattered myself I should never enter."

When he reached Vienna about three in the afternoon, the change which had taken place in himself came home to him yet more vividly. The last time he had been there, and especially the time before, the very air of the streets had seemed to whisper of ambition to him. He had felt himself becoming one of the important figures of Europe, and about to be honored and welcomed as a part of its most stately life; while the pride of blood which underlay his desire of achievement had been stimulated there as it could have been nowhere else. But now all was different. The very reasons which formerly had made the Austrian capital, with all its glitter of to-day and all its traditions of yesterday, seem to him familiar and sympathetic, made it now seem bleak and alien. It seemed as if he had neither part nor lot in it. Under other circumstances, without losing an hour, he would have gone to the British Embassy to see the Ambassador and his wife; but now, though he thought of them still as two of his best friends, he shrank from the atmosphere which breathed through their bright drawing-rooms. It was once his natural element; he should now, he felt, be like a ghost in it. Far more answering to his mood was what he actually did with himself. He

went to the offices of the International Sleeping Car Company and took three places for Paris in next day's Orient Express. In doing this he was conscious of doing something, not for himself only, but also for the woman he was devoted to; and the simple act seemed to be bringing him close to her. He even welcomed the fact that he had, out of his own pocket, to take an extra ticket, in order that she and her maid might be quite secure of having a cabin to themselves. That business concluded, he rambled through the town like a tourist, and presently bethought himself of going to the Ring or Boulevard, in which her apartment was situated, and taking a look at her windows. This he found, however, was hardly an attainable solace, as there was nothing to tell him which her windows were. They were somewhere or other in a huge block of building, whose frontage was rough with carving and gay with extended awnings, the entire upper part being devoted to flats or offices, the lower to glittering shops. Mme. Schilizzi's flat was apparently over the shop of a jeweler, and some of the objects in the window were at once so tasteful and splendid that Grenville for a minute or two stood in the street studying them. While thus engaged he was startled by the sound of his own name, pronounced with a charming though very foreign inflexion, and looking round he discovered the Countess C——, who seemed to have just emerged from the jeweler's swing-doors. She was full of questions, which she gave him no time to answer, and then of invitations, answers to which she demanded; but, finding that Grenville was only a bird of passage, and that he could neither come to her castle in the country nor join her in her box at the opera, she insisted on tak-

ing him off that moment for a drive in the Prater. Unwilling to yield, he had got no excuse for refusing. A huge engine of torture in the shape of a heavy barouche, with two gawky footmen in salmon-colored stockings, attending it, was there touching the curbstone; and this was presently bearing him away with the Countess, hardly more willing than Proserpine when she went from the fields of Ennes. Till they reached the Prater ennui was his chief suffering, but here ennui was lost in a kind of painful interest. As they drove through the crowd of carriages, or paused now and then under the trees, the Countess kept pointing out to him this and that personage, one great as a magnate, one fascinating as a beauty, whom he ought to know, and whom he would know, would he only stay in Vienna. Some of these desirable acquaintances stopped for a moment and spoke to her; and Grenville noticed in both men and women the same charm of manner which had at once attracted him in the Countess. Suddenly a carriage came by, the harness glancing with silver, and the servants breasting the air with gold lace and crimson waistcoats. It contained two ladies and a dark-bearded handsome man.

"Look," said the Countess, "there is the King of Moldavia."

Grenville turned, but it was not the king he looked at. What held his attention was two faces under parasols. Of one he only saw that it was middle-aged, refined, and cynical. The other he recognized by its wonderful velvety eyes—a face now set off by a dress almost insolent in its daintiness. Everyone as it passed gave it the homage of a stare. It was the face of Miss Juanita Markham.



"The woman with her," said the Countess, "is the well-known Baroness X——. I suppose you have heard *her* story. Your pretty compatriot is hardly to be congratulated on her friend; and as for the king, they say he is tiring of her already."

All this spectacle, varying, bewildering, brilliant, with a key to it here and there given by the Countess's comments, had for Grenville, no doubt, a degree of interest; but it pained and chilled him in two distinct ways. It made him feel how Irma was taking him away from it; and also how *it*, at the moment, was taking him away from Irma. His imagination, he felt, was being invaded by a vulgar crowd out of the street which divided him from her to whom all its domain was consecrated. "Irma! Irma!" he again repeated to himself passionately, but under his breath, and with a due mundane self-repression, so that the Countess who once actually caught a murmur, concluded that he was merely blowing away a speck of dust from his waistcoat.

At last his trial was over. The Countess dropped him at his hotel. The moment the porter saw him he put into his hand a letter. Grenville received it eagerly, fancying it might be from Mrs. Schilizzi. It was not. It was from the Ambassadors, who had somehow heard of his arrival. She begged him to come that night to dinner; there would be no party. He dispatched an acceptance, resigned rather than pleased; and, indeed, when the time came he was little less than miserable. His host and hostess talked to him much of his prospects; and he could not explain that they were now his prospects no longer. He was conscious of their wishes for his success, but their very wishes irritated him. He

felt as jealous of any influence that would draw him from Mrs. Schilizzi as he could feel of any that would draw her from him. A strange sensation was dawning on him that his affection for her was, except for herself, making him alone in life. Wearied with the fatigues of the day, he returned to his hotel early, and was just preparing to close his eyes in sleep, and so to abridge the hours which still separated him from her, when the thought suddenly struck him that it might be a help and a pleasure to her if he went to the station and met her on her arrival. To rouse himself now was really a matter of effort; his eyelids were so heavy he could hardly keep them apart. But rouse himself he did, and redressed himself; and driving to the station, he awaited her. As the train came drifting in, he half feared that something would have detained her, and his heart gratuitously embittered itself with a pang of groundless disappointment. Among the dim figures that emerged he soon detected hers, and hastened to her glowing with sudden happiness. With a start of suspense and pleasure, she gave him her hand and looked at him, but the moment after the pleasure gave place to nervousness, and her voice, hardening and acquiring a note of petulance, "You shouldn't have come," she said. "Please go away and leave me."

"Can I do," he said, "nothing for you? May not I get you a carriage?"

"No, no," she said, almost turning her back on him. "Good-night; you can call at twelve to-morrow." And the next moment he saw her hasten toward a man—a tall corpulent man, whose hands glistened with rings, and who, with the aid of his nose, suggested finance and

Israel. With her hand on the sleeve of this gentleman's furred overcoat, she quickly disappeared in the direction of the cabs and omnibuses; and Grenville returned to the bed on which he had been about to rest himself, full of a bewildered bitterness which made rest impossible. He could not banish her strange reception of him from his memory. Her voice through the watches of the night kept ringing and echoing in his ears, and hour by hour its tone became harder and more bitter, till her image at last appeared to him, as he lay there half dreaming, like that of a woman who had suddenly grown to hate him, and having ruined his life was going now to spurn it away from her. The condition of his thoughts in the morning was somewhat calmer, but a sense of estrangement from her remained with him even then, and anxiety branded his forehead with its keen physical pain. But through all this he was famishing for her presence; and it wanted still a good ten minutes to twelve when he was standing at the door of the building in which her apartment was, and rousing the concierge with a peal of the electric bell.

"The first floor," said the man. "The first door on the right."

And Grenville, with trembling hand, was presently again ringing. A white-capped woman with an inquiring look admitted him, and, passing through a lobby in which the carpets were up, he found himself in a large drawing-room overlooking the street. There were no traces of life in it, except that on one of the tables was a pair of gloves and a parasol, both of which he recognized. He looked about him, full of curious interest. The floor was covered with thick red velvet carpet.

There were red velvet chairs and sofas, whose wood-work was sumptuously carved, but which suggested the fittings of an hotel, rather than of a private dwelling. The walls were papered with staring brown and gold, relieved only by two large mirrors and a life-size photograph of the Emperor, liberally colored in oil. Here and there were some fine vases and candelabra, but they seemed arranged for sale rather than ornament; and the only other objects that decorated the shelves and tables were some ormolu trays for cigar ashes, some inlaid cabinets for cigars, and several sets of bottles and glasses for liqueurs, colored and gilt as gaudily as artists in glass could make them. One thing more he discovered, and one thing only. It was a photograph lying under one of the ormolu ash-trays, faded and ragged, and representing a half clothed Viennese actress.

Anything more depressing, anything more hopelessly *bourgeois* it would hardly have been possible to imagine. And this was the home, or at least, one of the homes, of the woman to whom he was devoting everything! He thought of the drawing-rooms at the Embassy, and compared them with it. They seemed to belong to two wholly different universes—designed for the lives of people who had not a thought in common. A surprise which he could not analyze at first occupied his mind, and made him forget how the time was passing; but at last it gave place to wonder as to when Mrs. Schilizzi would present herself; and wonder by and by gave place to impatience and resentment. Of all the troubles of life, the strained suspense of waiting, with every nerve stretched of doubt, of hope, and of hearing, in proportion to its real importance is the hardest for some tem-

peraments to bear. Grenville's temperament was one of these; and it is no exaggeration to say that he soon was enduring tortures. Angry, savage thoughts came leaping into his consciousness, longing to assail the woman whose conduct seemed now so heartless; and he felt as he stood among them like a man in a cage of lions, trying to beat them down, to kill them, or to cow them into silence, and yet strong with a temptation to let them have their way. At last—and it seemed that he had been kept on the rack for hours—he heard, or he thought he heard, something like a distant rustle. All his senses of a sudden became hearing. He held his breath; he started; the door suddenly opened; and there before him, her eyes eager with welcome, was the woman for whom he waited.

She looked at him; she came up to him. She was wholly, entirely different from the distorted image which his mind had been just fashioning; but the stress of his late mood was still affecting his muscles, and his voice and look as he greeted her were, against his will, unnatural. She had greeted him as she used to do in the forest, at once gentle and passionate; and it was not for a minute or two that she took note of this change. At last she said, scanning him:

"What's the matter with you? Are you angry? Have I kept you waiting? Am I late?"

"No," he said, smiling in spite of himself, "only three-quarters of an hour. It wasn't that; only, after your anger last night, I felt rather doubtful if you ever would come at all. I thought, you see, that at the station I might have been some help to you. In fact I got out of bed in the middle of the night to come. You

must forgive me for doing unintentionally what roused in you so much resentment."

For the first time the idea seemed to dawn on her that she had done or said anything which could possibly wound his feelings. A flush came into her cheeks, and a sudden moisture into her eyes, and putting her hands on his shoulders, she whispered, "Dear, forgive me. Come, Bobby, come, sit down by me. We are all alone—forgive me. But coming to meet me like that, late at night at the station, was calculated to put me in such a very false position, and it might easily have given Herr Silberman, a banker whom I happen to know, such a very cruel impression of me. You know you told me yourself how readily the world would judge wrongly of us. I felt so afraid and nervous, I hardly know what I said to you; and I trusted you so completely, I felt you would understand."

The trouble was over, peace had again returned to him. "In twenty minutes," she said, "I have told them to bring luncheon. Oh, Bobby, tell me, what do you think of this place? Isn't it dreadful? It will show you something of what my life is. Paul thinks it's beautiful. At first I tried to alter it; but it made him perfectly furious. He swore at me. He did more than swear. Look at my wrist. Do you see that faint scar on it? Wait a moment, and I will show you what is its history." She went to a drawer in a cabinet and brought out an ivory paper knife. "Paul," she said, "struck me with that, because I told him his room was vulgar, and wanted to put away those terrible sets of liqueur things. And there—I see, you've been looking at that photograph. The woman is Paul's great friend, and when I am away

she reigns here. He thinks I know nothing about her, and this he must have left by accident. So far as appearances go, he is full of ideas of respectability; and he thinks that I ought to be ignorant that bad women exist. Ah!" she exclaimed sighing, and suddenly changing the subject, not as if in pain, but rather as if it repelled and wearied her, "how often when I looked round this room have I thought of our rooms at home—the shelves crowded with books, the chintzes and the faded carpets. Hark; here is Gretchen with the luncheon. When we have lunched you must go; and you must meet me punctually at the train."

This arrangement entailed a two hours' separation; Grenville bore it in peace. Their quarrel had made their union closer.

He was at the station before her, watching the passengers for the express, as they slowly assembled, and hoping they would all be strangers. He deputed Fritz to wait for Mrs. Schilizzi, to help her maid with the luggage, and to see them settled in their places. Until the train started, he had hardly done more than speak to her. No one could have imagined that they were traveling together by concert. She appreciated the quickness with which he had learnt his lesson. But as soon as the train was off and they both were perfectly satisfied that there was not a single passenger known by sight to either of them, they secured a sofa in the saloon which formed part of the Orient Express, and engaged a table for dinner in the restaurant car adjoining. It was five when they started in the mellow and golden afternoon, and the air from the gardens in the suburbs came with a gust of summer. In half an hour they were nearing meadows

and wooded hills, vivid with exuberant green; and the shining curves of the Danube began to show and hide themselves, here reflecting a sail, here a town or a villa, and here the domes and façade of some palatial monastery. During their dinner they had drifted, not perceiving it, into the night; and the windows, instead of revealing the moving landscape, did but repeat the light of the lamps in the gilded roof. Mrs. Schilizzi retired with her maid to her own compartment, and Grenville shared his with a pasha and two Roumanians. The following evening, again in the warmth and sunlight, their eyes began to be greeted by lodges and blossoming gardens, and houses with mansard roofs. Then came buildings stretching in long white masses, and tall brick chimneys pricking the clear blue air. The train rattled over points; and they were soon stationary in Paris. To Grenville and his companion the journey had been a long idyl, and they had almost banished from their minds the doubtful sequel it was leading to. But an hour or two later, when after a hasty meal they found themselves seated in a crowded carriage for Calais, and heard the language of England spoken in several accents, when English newspapers were being called for and unfolded, and two puffy-looking men began making arrangements for going next night to a farce at a certain theater in the Strand—they felt for a second time that they had dropped down out of cloudland, and would have to face and struggle with the squalid difficulties of reality.



## CHAPTER XVI.

MRS. SCHILIZZI was to be met at Charing Cross by her mother-in-law—a lady whose instincts always distrusted beauty, and who, strong in the virtue that comes of having never possessed it, felt herself bound, whenever circumstances admitted, to act toward her daughter-in-law the part of a guardian angel. Her zeal, indeed, was much in excess of that which a well-worn simile ascribes to the angels of tradition; and instead of contenting herself with keeping her charge under her wing, she endeavored to hold her in the grip of her guardian clutches. Grenville gathered this and more from what Mrs. Schilizzi told him. He accordingly parted from her at Dover, taking the train to Victoria, and engaging not to call on her till she wrote to him to give him instructions. Reaching London at six, sleeping for an hour or two, or trying to sleep, he found himself by twelve washed and brushed and dressed, and so far as externals went, ready to face the world; but the day that lay before him seemed blanker than the sands of the Sahara. He could hardly realize what time of the year it was, or in which of its social stages he might expect London to be. Had the season begun? Was it the Easter or the Whitsuntide holidays? What acquaintances should he find present or absent? These questions presented themselves, not because he wished for society, but for a reason precisely opposite. The social world, the world

of dinners and parties, had become a thing which it was weariness even to think of. Could he have so arranged it, he would willingly have seen no one till the hour came when he should again see Mrs. Schilizzi. That, however, at the earliest, would not be till to-morrow; and meanwhile he had business matters to attend to, all of them fraught with pain, doubt, and embarrassment. He looked at the wall above his sideboard. His favorite painting was gone from it. He looked at a photograph of his home. His home was about to go. Some dusty cards of invitation were still sticking in his looking-glass. One of them bore the name of the wife of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. He remembered the party it referred to—his last before leaving England—small and brilliant; no common political gathering; and he thought of how he should soon return to the same house, not to fulfill but destroy the hopes that were then formed of him. His lawyer and the Chancellor—here were two people whom he ought to see at once, and for seeing whom he ought to prepare himself; and more formidable still, he would have to communicate with Lord Solway. But to none of these tasks, or the preparation for them, did he feel in any way equal. His mind shrank from them with an aversion at once weary and irritable, and wandered away to a certain suburban villa, till an impatient longing to reach it—a longing which he knew to be futile—threatened to incapacitate him for any other exertion. Presently, however, this weak and subdued condition aroused his own contempt; and by a strong effort of will he pulled together his faculties, and forced them to their distasteful duties.

First of all he began to write to the Chancellor, hardly

knowing, when he took the pen in his hand, what he was going to say, or what position he should assume. But thoughts, however scattered, are things which, in many cases, need only a severe enough summons to gather them together in an instant. Some men often wait idly for their thoughts to inspire their will; whereas what they really need is, that their will should compel their thoughts. Grenville found out this; and presently, to his own surprise, a letter was written which exactly suited the situation. With every phrase of regret that could flatter the person he was addressing, he stated that private matters, which did not admit of explanation, would prevent his going, at the time arranged, to Constantinople, and indeed had rendered his whole plans so uncertain, that he must renounce all claim to the privilege of serving the Government. There was another distinguished candidate for the post he had thus renounced; and he concluded his letter by saying that his worst regrets were tempered by the knowledge that his loss could be so well supplied. This letter he at once dispatched by messenger; and he then drove off to consult with his man of business. To renounce his career he found had been fairly easy. It was not so easy to write the irrevocable line, which would cut off from him forever the old home of his fathers, haunted with memories of his childhood and dreams of future children. He contented himself, therefore, with learning the terms of the offer made, ascertaining afresh the present condition of the property, and saying (though his mind was really made up already) that he should have to consider for a day or two before he came to a decision. "And yet," he said to himself, as he left his lawyer's door, "why do

I hesitate? A home—a home for my children! I forget myself. A man situated as I am, has no need of a home; or, rather, for him a home must be forever impossible. I must now write to Lord Solway and explain to him that I never shall have one."

This last was the hardest task of any; but again by force of will he compelled his thoughts to his service and he cut an easy way through difficulties he had fancied insuperable. He apologized for not having written earlier, to describe the upshot of his meeting with Lady Evelyn at Vicenza. He then explained that, far from having been able to propose to her, he had come to feel doubtful as to whether she even valued his company, and that before he could assure himself as to how matters really stood, her aunt's illness had for the time stopped everything. Here he suddenly paused, wondering how he should proceed. His letter thus far had the merit of being perfectly true; but as to his political career, how could he be equally candid? He could not palm off on Lord Solway a reference to "private matters," and tell him that a career in which he had taken such a fatherly interest was about to be abandoned for indefinite and mysterious reasons. "And yet," thought Grenville, "what is there I can say?" He detested falsehood; and it was impossible to even hint at the truth. At last he wrote as follows: "With regard to my appointment at Constantinople there is still much to be settled; and it is partly on account of that that I now have returned to London. My confidence alike in your kindness and your profound knowledge of the world, enables me to say to you what another might misinterpret as ungrateful; and this is, that all these affairs of mine, which you have

so generously tried to forward, are now in a condition to prosper best by being left to slowly settle themselves, unquestioned and unnoticed. In saying this," Grenville added, after a moment's hesitation, "I need hardly ask you to forgive me."

This letter he sent by post, feeling no special desire to expedite its arrival; but when, having gone out for an hour or two, he came back to his room, he found an answer awaiting him, sent by hand, in the shape of an urgent invitation to dinner for the same night. He dispatched an acceptance. Hateful as the thought of society was to him, the leaden intolerable time that lay like a scorching desert between him and the earliest post by which he could hear from Mrs. Schilizzi, was worse even than society, and society would assist in abridging it. While he was dressing a large envelope was presented to him, from which he extracted a card for yet another entertainment—a concert in Downing Street, at the house of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

The moment he entered Lord Solway's drawing-room, he saw that the party was one of the distinguished kind. There was no Royalty present; but the first person he recognized was a celebrated dowager, whose diamonds were generally a sign that a king or prince was in the neighborhood. There was more than one blue ribbon; and but one unmarried woman—the daughter of a widowed diplomat. Lord Solway shuffled up to Grenville, greeting him with a benignant smile, which however benignant to friends seemed to hint that it could be saturnine to enemies.

"You wrote me," he said with a sort of hollow

chuckle, "a very nice sensible letter. It contained one thing only for which you ought to apologize."

"What was that?" asked Grenville.

"Your apology," said Lord Solway. "Come—I must take you to the young lady—I don't know if you know her—whom you are to make happy this evening. Lady —," he said, pausing before a magnificently dressed widow of sixty, "this is a young man dying to make your acquaintance. He's come all the way from Vienna to take you in to dinner."

"How silly he is," said the lady, who blushed and bridled till one of her chins overlapped her emerald necklace. "I've known Mr. Grenville for years; and I saw him at Vienna a month since."

She was indeed one of the luncheon party which Grenville had encountered at the Embassy; and, however absent or dejected he might be at heart, she left him at dinner no time to betray himself. Gossip and scandal, balls, liaisons and marriages, came from her lips sparkling like a succession of pearls; and she never had showed to greater advantage her talent for two things, which are not perhaps as different as might be thought from the names she gave them—picking people to pieces, and putting two and two together. Want of charity, however, has this advantage over charity, that it sometimes fails at last; and it did so on this occasion. Lady — found toward the middle of dinner that the characters of all her acquaintances had died a painless death at her hands; so she left them in Grenville's memory, where she knew they would come to life again, and turning to her other neighbor, a widowed duke of seventy,

renewed, with a well preserved archness for which she happened to be celebrated, an attack on his ducal heart, which practice enabled him to resist. In spite of himself Grenville was becoming amused. On the other side of him was the one unmarried young lady, with the eyes of five and twenty, and the happy *aplomb* of forty. Grenville knew her by sight, but he had never made her acquaintance; and he was pleasantly flattered, when she, the moment his widow had discarded him, met his eyes with a smile, and quickly began a conversation. She seemed quite aware that he had just come from Vienna, and treated his appointment at Constantinople as a matter of public news. She was acquainted with both cities, and talked about both pleasantly, giving her social judgments neatly, like the strokes of an artist's pencil, never laughing at anyone, not even the widow near them, but letting it be seen constantly that she could laugh if she chose; and all through this, by some subtle delusive means, not designedly, but as if by a natural instinct, she contrived to make Grenville conscious of two flattering facts—that she felt he was an interesting man, and that she knew he was a distinguished one. The anxiety and the longing for the absent, which was really occupying his mind, began to be overlaid and hidden by a little superficial pleasure, and after a time he felt himself taking note that the speaker's lips were pretty, and that her right cheek had a dimple. But the moment this crossed his mind, with a sudden and painful vividness, another image—other lips and cheeks—hovered before him like an image painted on the air. The first thing that reminded him of the charm of woman's beauty repelled him from the women present, glorifying the woman

absent; and, completely for a second or two losing command of his thoughts, he actually found himself murmuring the words, "Irma! Irma!" He turned to his neighbor. She was looking at him. There was no help for it—he lied. "I'm right again now," he said. "I just had a twinge of neuralgia."

After dinner he fell an easier prey to a flattery, merely social, which he received from the elderly great ladies; and one of them who discovered that he had been asked to the concert in Downing Street offered to take him in her carriage with her. He went. There were many hours that still required killing. Before going to bed he wished to be absolutely tired, or he would not, he knew, get a single hour's repose. The concert tired him more than the dinner party. Several women, charming, young, and beautiful, showed themselves delighted to see him, and counted on his returning the feeling. The feeling was not at his command, but the manner and look proper to it, from mere force of habit, came to his aid and produced themselves; and anyone watching him would have thought on two or three occasions that he had fallen a happy victim to the eyes that were then detaining him. Several observers indeed did think so; but no observer could have known that at the very moment when appearances seemed most to warrant such conclusions the name of an absent woman was still secretly on his lips; and that the touch of a hand not hers on his arm, as he went to supper, sent through his nerves a shudder as if it had been some pollution.

The following morning, when his letters were brought to his bedside, it was some moments before he dared to look at them, he was so perversely fearful of finding that



there was none from her. However, there was one. It asked him to come and see her at twelve. "I have told my mother-in-law," it continued, "that you know Iichtenbourg and the neighborhood; she is not surprised therefore at my wanting to make some inquiries of you."

In one way this delighted him. He would be with her sooner than he expected. He had, however, the preceding night promised his host to call at twelve in Downing Street; and there was some awkwardness in postponing so important an engagement. Postpone it he did, however, dispatching a messenger with a letter, full of excuses which were not perhaps very accurate. But the messenger had hardly been gone for half an hour when a telegram reached him from her, begging him to come at four. Here was a double annoyance—first the dreary interval thus suddenly thrust between him and the time for meeting her; and then a confused sense of that strange feminine selfishness which will allow a woman sometimes to disregard in a man's life every claim or interest not immediately connected with herself. For a moment there blew through his mind a little east wind of reproaches against her; but this went by, and without losing a moment, he hurried off to Downing Street, reaching it before his messenger. He was naturally before his time; and passed, as he knew he should have to do, a good half hour of waiting, which his thoughts made anxious and miserable. He tried to arrange precisely what he should say at the forthcoming interview; but every moment his considerations were interrupted by thoughts of her without whom he could hardly breathe. He tried to sit still, and amuse himself with a few blue books; but a physical weight seemed to be

lying on his chest and smothering him; and his nerves constrained him to keep moving about restlessly. He could think of only one thing which would have given him immediate comfort; and that would have been to tear to pieces two huge blue books about the indigo trade, which he had twice taken up, and which nauseated him with their intolerable pages. But he stoically resisted this temptation of the devil; and a secretary at last appeared, and invited him to the sanctum of the minister. The result of the interview was more satisfactory than he had hoped. It settled nothing, and therefore was quickly over; and he went away with the news that, owing to certain recent events, it would be quite possible, if he wished it, to give him another two months before entering on his post or resigning it.

The clock was striking four when he found himself on the heights of Hampstead; and after much inquiry of the way, and numbers of misdirections, his cab stopped at the gate of a semi-detached brick villa, separated from the road by a walk and a few flower beds. As he rang the bell, a presentiment he was unable to conquer filled his mind, that she would not be true to her appointment; and he had prepared his mind for the bitterness of learning that this was so. The door was opened by a man-servant, who looked like a dissenting minister; and when Grenville learnt from him that she actually was at home, the evangel that came from such a mouth seemed almost incredible. He was shown into a drawing-room on the ground floor, where French polish breathed from mahogany furniture, and antimacassars had settled themselves like a flock of sea gulls. There were some large but not beautiful pieces of Oriental china; some huge

looking-glasses, hideous in florid frames; there was "The Lady of the Lake" in a varnished tartan binding; some calf-bound volumes of a ponderous quarto Bible; and on the chimney-piece, as Grenville at last discovered, some beautiful Greek vases, with figures of the Amazons on them, of Zeus and of Pallas Athene; but these, as it seemed from British ideas of decorum, had been draped in veils of opaque spotted muslin. This discovery saved him from the pangs of some moments of impatience; and he was still beguiled by a sense of unexpected amusement when the opening door startled him, and Mrs. Schilizzi entered. He had been secretly annoyed here, even more than he had been at Vienna, by being forced to connect her with surroundings so alien to himself; but the moment she now appeared, the effect of circumstances was reversed. Her dress, her look, her movement; seemed by contrast with the room to possess an added charm and refinement, giving her the aspect of an apparition; and her nearness to what was vulgar and tasteless showed him how completely she was detached from it.

Her eyes were soft with a glad ethereal welcome; on her lips was an eager smile; but as he approached her, she gave him her hand in greeting, with a curious coldness which effectually kept him at a distance; and with a quick, peremptory frown, "Don't come near me," she said. "You must sit there quite away from me."

In act he was completely obedient, but his mind was up in arms and rebellious; and though he still smiled as he spoke, and responded sufficiently to what she said to him, he felt his manner assuming a certain chill formality, which meant, "If you are distant, I can be distant

too." As for her, had his judgment been only calm enough, he would have recognized in the tones of her voice and in the way her eyes followed him, everything that she had left unexpressed in her greeting. He would have recognized it also in something else, which did as a fact merely annoy him farther; and this was the sort of subject to which she managed to confine the conversation. She began talking about the vases. That was pleasant enough, and he really enjoyed a short laugh on the matter. Then she went on, "I don't know what you will think of Mrs. Grudden."

"Who is Mrs. Grudden?" he asked.

"Oh," she replied, "my mother-in-law! She married again after Paul's father died. She, you know, was English—as English as anyone could be. She was born at Clapham, and belonged to some religious sect there; and this room represents her idea of the beauty of respectable holiness. Everything is an expensive protest against beauty of any other kind. She and Paul's father quarreled like cat and dog; but, as soon as he died, she began to speak of him as a saint, and she kept those vases there as 'a souvenir of my dear first husband,' though I fancy she enjoys their petticoats partly as a slap at his memory. He brought them from Athens, and they really are very fine. Mr. Grudden, who died of a sore throat which he caught at a meeting for the suppression of dancing on the stage, was at first anxious to have them broken to pieces; but my mother-in-law, who resents all suggestions on principle, has often told me how indignant she was at this one; and then when Mr. Grudden timidly ventured on another, which was that they should be sent as a present to the British Museum,

"Mr. Grudden," she said, "I know my own business best. Were they sent to the Museum, their indecorum would be exposed to the public. Here, modestly covered, they at all events can do no mischief; and I can avoid affronting my dear first husband's memory, without feeling that I have any sin on my conscience."

In the way all this was said there was no trace of unkindness. There seemed to be in her nature a sort of gentleness which left her blows their precision but checked their force just as they were in the act of striking. Under other circumstances all this would have given him pleasure; but now, in his present situation, half separated from her, seeing her only in this breathless interval, he was longing to breathe to her some words of devotion and to receive from her the comfort of some answer; and her wasting this brief opportunity in gossip about Greek vases and a mother-in-law, began to fill him presently with a bitter sense that he was being trifled with. He tried once or twice to force her to speak more seriously, but each time she reverted to topics that were more or less trivial; and at last, stung with her treatment, and hardly reflecting on what he did, he arose abruptly, and said to her, "I have bored you enough. I must be going."

"Must you?" she said, startled, and looking as if she understood nothing of his mood. "What time is it? It is late. Perhaps you had better go, then."

He had not expected to be taken at his word like this. He stared at her incredulously for a second or two, and then, in a voice which she hardly recognized as his own, "When shall I see you again?" he said. "I will never

come again, if you don't wish me to. I will never trouble you more."

"Bobby!" she exclaimed, "what can you be talking of? How silly you are! You had, indeed, better go now, unless you wish to see Mrs. Grudden." For the first time, as she looked at him, it struck her that there was pain in his expression. She came close to him, and taking him by both hands, with distress in her own eyes, she said to him, "What is it, dear?"

"I feel," he said, "that you have hardly let me speak to you, and now you turn me away, as if I were some chance visitor, and you will not even trouble yourself to tell me when, if ever, I am to see you again."

"Don't," she said, "don't remain any longer so near me. I feel as if all these mahogany chairs had eyes. You can see me to-morrow, I think. I have to go to my lawyer's, and you might take me afterward to some place where we can have luncheon. I will let you know to-night. Please don't be angry with me, but go."

Half soothed by her parting words and manner, and yet still embittered by the unnatural constraint of the interview, he went out into the maze of suburban roads, and heavy with a sense of desolation began to walk toward London. But a week ago—only a week ago—they were in that enchanted world of forest and lake and solitude, and now, he reflected, how great and how desolating was the difference.

The following day the promised letter arrived, and, having repaired at the hour named in it to the street where her lawyer lived, he waited for half an hour, and she at last came out to him. There was a well-known

hotel in the neighborhood, and they lunched together in the coffee room. Confidential conversation was, under the circumstances, impossible; but there was something in her manner which spoke to him of her affection as plainly as words could have done, and perhaps more plainly than was prudent. But after luncheon she was obliged to meet her mother-in-law, and they parted without the solace of one single natural moment.

In the next few days they met in the same way. Sometimes she was tender with him, as she had been on this occasion; and not she, but circumstances, were the only objects of his resentment. But once or twice she seemed ill-tempered and absent; her business seemed so to preoccupy her as almost to put him out of her thoughts; and once, when he slightly reproved her for not noticing some personal question, she turned on him, saying, "What is it you ask me? Do you think I came here for the purpose of talking to *you*?"

That evening he wrote this in his diary: "We have two consciences—a moral one and an intellectual one; and most men, who have not silenced both, are not only accustomed at times to examine their condition, but from time to time see it in different lights. Both morally and intellectually, in a way I could never have anticipated, I have seen my conduct and my choice in life justified. That is to say, I have seen this at times. But putting the moral question quite aside, my intellectual conscience at moments exhibits me to myself as a fool. Here am I, deliberately—not in an impulsive moment—but deliberately, and with a careful and painful choice of means, preparing to divest myself of everything which the ordinary judgment would pronounce to be best worth

living for. I am casting into the fire all that ambition craves for. The home of my family I am going to sell; and all chances of a better in another sense I am voluntarily thrusting away from me. And for what? This very morning, before I met her, I was with my own man of business, again going over the details of the proposed sale of my property; and when I met her, for whose sake I am doing this—good. God! how does she receive me? I should have felt less pain had she stuck a dagger into me. No—no. It is not the pain I wince at, but the thought that her nature makes it possible for her to inflict it. And yet, all the same, I can plead for and make out a case for her; and then—here is the distracting part of the case—the moment I have done this I refute all my own pleadings, and represent her to myself as everything that —. No, I won't think of it. But apart from this, how wretched my position seems. Three-quarters of an hour out of the twenty-four is all I now see of her; and these few minutes are snatched with difficulty, and preceded by hours of anxiety, as if all time was on the rack. And yet—and yet—if you are not the most contemptible of women—Irma, Irma, I should like to be saying this to you—if, in short, you are worth anything, to me you are worth everything."

Two days later he met her in a happier way, and so soon as the conditions were changed she changed also. She became like her former self. She wrote to him: "Call for me here at two, and we will go to my own house. I have several things to attend to; and I should like you to see the place."

This invitation to Grenville was like summer returned in winter. It is true that when she met him in Mrs.



Grudden's drawing-room she still treated him with a certain superficial coldness, but it was a coldness which her eyes belied.

"We will walk," she said. "It is the other side of the Heath. Come; I am quite ready. Let us be out of this dreadful room. As I told you the other day, my mother-in-law and all Paul's family seem to be staring at me out of these mahogany chairs." They were soon outside, and escaping from the region of streets, had taken a path over the broken and furze-grown heath; and now, as they seemed to be more securely alone together, her own natural manner, which Grenville had almost forgotten, came back to her.

"Irma," he said, "do you know how I feel now? I feel as if you had been dead, and had suddenly come to life again."

"Indeed," she replied, "I have been living under conditions that well might kill me." Her look and manner both showed that she understood him; but they left him sore with a sense that her sympathy was inadequate to his pain. "There," she said presently, "there is our house beyond those pine trees."

It was a large stuccoed villa in a garden full of foliage, with a gleaming conservatory on one side, and stables and out-buildings on the other. The drive and the flower beds were kept with exquisite neatness; some Guernsey cows were grazing in a quiet paddock; the stone steps that led to the glazed doors of the entrance were as white as a clean tablecloth. Everything presented the aggressive and painful neatness of a man who can think himself fashionable only when his clothes are new. Indoors Grenville received the same impression.

The floors were scrupulously polished; the walls smelt of paint and gilding; but at the same time he was astonished by the quality of the objects that surrounded him. There was in the hall a magnificent Italian coffer, and a huge picture, which purported to be a Rubens, and which, if not an original, was at all events a splendid copy. There were fine Florentine chairs, and a large Venetian mirror; and doors on one side opened into the conservatory, which was green with tropical vegetation. The reception rooms were just what the hall might have led one to expect. The ceilings were gaudy with Parisian clouds and cupids; there was abundance of modern furniture, which had been bought at an exhibition; some Sevres and Chelsea china; some marketable modern pictures; and placed about under glass cases some cameos, some crystal goblets, and other objects similar. Though nothing individually was first-rate, nothing was bad; but the effect of the whole was frightful. It represented a life altogether at variance with whatever beauty the individual things possessed. Grenville tried to keep this impression to himself, and merely said to Mrs. Schilizzi, "What a fine collection you have here!"

"Paul," she replied, "says there is not a thing that would not fetch now at Christie's fifteen per cent. more than the price he paid for it. Come—I will show you *his* room."

This was full of floridly-carved walnut furniture, much resembling that in the apartment at Vienna. It was all, as cabinet makers say, *en suite*, and the walls were adorned with pictures of race horses and ballet girls, and some shelves designed for books, but used for boxes of cigars. On the thick hearthrug was an electro-plated

spittoon. All bore the same relation to the houses to which Grenville was accustomed as a schoolboy's nonsense verses might bear to a passage from Vergil—composed of the same materials, but differing in having no meaning. At last, however, a door was opened, through which he passed into a wholly different atmosphere. Here was a room, chill indeed with the tidiness that comes of being not occupied, but full of all the signs of delicate and refined life. The chairs were covered with old-fashioned flowered chintz; there were books in profusion, bound, not expensively, but with all the careful taste of one who evidently loved them. Over the chimney-piece were a few Chelsea figures; and on each side of the mirror were some cases of old miniatures.

"I have told the housekeeper," she said, "to let us have tea here. We can be quiet here for a little; and, dear friend, for a little I can be myself again. How horrid and how strange you must have thought me, these last five days. Bobby," she went on, "this room means to me an entire lifetime. It echoes with painful memories—with my first acquaintance with pain. And yet, compared with the other rooms in this house, I look back on it as a haven of rest—as a place where my heart ceased aching."

He began to look at her books, at her pieces of china, and her miniatures. She went round the room with him, standing by him and explaining everything. He saw the volumes she had valued most when a child, with the blots and pictures she had made on margins and title-pages. She pointed out to him her mother's miniature and her father's; and all the affection and purity which had brooded over her childhood, seemed to spread its wings

over both of them, and fold them in a common shelter. "Irma," he said, "where shall I see you to-morrow?"

"By the way," she answered, "I wanted to talk to you about that. To-morrow I am quite free. Mrs. Grudden is going into the country; but the day after I am doing the same thing myself. That day is Saturday and I must stay away till Tuesday." An exclamation of displeasure involuntarily escaped Grenville. "Don't be angry," she said. "Why should you be so hasty? You can come with me if you like. That was what I was wishing to tell you. I am going to a little seaside place in Suffolk, to be for a day or two with a child of one of my sisters." Grenville's expression underwent an immediate change. This news, indeed, was beyond all his hopes.

"Of course I will come," he said. "But about to-morrow—listen. I have seen *your* home to-day. Will you come with me and see mine to-morrow? I am going to visit it, perhaps for the last time. It is," he went on, "only thirty miles from London." And he mentioned the railway by which to reach it, and also a convenient train. At first the expedition struck her as impossible. The fear of her mother-in-law seemed to paralyze her powers of movement; but the longing to come with him, growing as she thought over the project, presently showed her the means of absenting herself without offense.

At the appointed hour they met at Waterloo Bridge, and an hour's rapid traveling brought them to a Hampshire station, situated in a region of fir woods and wild commons. The dusty road, along which they were soon driving, was bordered with trees which made a flickering

shade. Yellow gorse glittered; red-roofed cottages sunned themselves; and the signs of old-world inns swung by the broad footpath. The whole landscape was full of that singular primitiveness that is to be found in so many places that are almost within sight of London; and Mrs. Schilizzi was at once surprised and delighted at it. At length they reached a wide undulating heath, tufted with gorse and heather, and surrounded by belts of woodland, where white glimpses of several important houses showed in the distance, sheltered in the haze of trees. In the middle of this heath, at the beginning of an abrupt ascent, Grenville stopped the driver, and proposed to his companion that they should walk. He took her by a footpath up the slope through the gorse bushes; and the moment she reached the summit she stopped short with an exclamation. For there, on a slope beyond, backed by blue fir woods, and fronted by grass and fern, a forest of twisted chimney stacks rose from a dim red pile, whose magnitude was at once apparent from the number of its mullioned windows. Curious turrets in the garden, steps and balustrades, were visible. An avenue of elms climbed the slope to the house; and hardly a furlong off were the lodge gates giving access to it. "And is that your home?" exclaimed Mrs. Schilizzi. "How beautiful!" The words were ordinary enough; but there was a sort of sob in her utterance of them, full of thoughts and feelings which she was unable to speak. "And am I depriving you of this?" Such was its general meaning. Grenville knew that it was so, but affected to be otherwise occupied; and when he spoke he forced his tone to be cheerful. "Do you see this?" he said, as he pulled a parcel from his pocket.

"Yes," she replied. "What is it?"

And as she looked and spoke, he saw that a tear fell from her cheek upon her glove. He showed her, with a laugh, a false beard and whiskers.

"I don't," he said, "want to be recognized—in case there should be anyone to recognize me. I want to go as a stranger, and I have an order to view, which will admit us. Look—are the things on properly? I wore them at some private theatricals; and my oldest friends said that they would never have recognized me. Tell me—do you think you would?"

She assured him his disguise was sufficient, and not altogether unbecoming; and they went together up the avenue. It was evident that the place received a certain amount of attention; but signs of neglect and dilapidation might be nevertheless traced everywhere. There was a sheet of water covered with green weed; there were fences ill-mended; and clumps of trees and shrubs killing each other for want of pruning. At last came the iron gates, just outside the house. Half their scroll work was eaten away by rust. They passed through these into a great graveled inclosure, and made their way toward the lofty windowed walls, which the down-drawn blinds covered with blots of whiteness.

"My tenants," said Grenville, "I know are away now. I shall pass for a stranger—for an intending purchaser. I couldn't have borne to be seen in my true character. Everything here has for me some memory—every door—every window—even that old kennel there."

An echoing peal of the bell had meanwhile summoned a servant; and in the course of a few minutes they were making their tour of the house. On the principal floor,

reached by a wide oak staircase, was a magnificent suite of rooms, hung with tapestry, and leading into a long gallery, full of old chests, and spinning-wheels, and the boots and breast-plates of cavaliers. To Mrs. Schilizzi the whole place was a revelation; and her breathless appreciation of it beguiled Grenville of his melancholy.

"We never," he said in French to her, "used to live in these rooms. We could hardly afford even to have them dusted. Our quarters," he continued, when they descended to the floor below, "our quarters were here, looking out on the garden." And the servant, as he spoke, admitted them to a good-sized drawing-room, hung with portraits, and surrounded with old gilt tables. On one of these portraits Grenville fixed his eyes; and then said hastily to the servant, "Pray open the dining-room—and the library, too, and the boudoir. I know the house—I shall have to see all of them."

The man went; and as soon as they were left alone, "Irma," said Grenville, "that picture is my mother. That is my little sister. Do you see this marble table, with a pack of cards inlaid in it? My mother was sitting by it, her head resting on her hand, the only time I ever said an unkind word to her. I was only fifteen then. I remember to this day the line of pain that quivered at the corners of her closed mouth. Everything speaks to me here. Don't think me a fool. I hope that man's not coming. I shall be too blind to see him."

His head was turned from her. He looked as if he were staring at the wall; but a moment later he turned to her, first biting his lip, then forcing a laugh; and there was nothing left in his eyes betraying a want of fortitude. Afterward they went into the garden, and then through

portions of the park. He pointed out to her the bark of a youngish beech tree, on which some letters were cut, distorted by the rind's growth. They were still legible; and they spelt, "Robert Grenville."

"Come," at last he said to her, "come—we have seen all. When my mother and my sister died, I was fonder of this place than of anything."

"And now," she said, "for the sake of a worthless woman, you are going to rob yourself of all that was most dear to you."

"No," he replied, "a woman has revealed to me something that is dearer."

At a convenient spot he freed himself of his slight disguise. They rejoined their carriage, and the train was hurrying them soon to London. Her manner to him now had a tenderness he had never known in it before. Her being before had seemed to cement itself to his. It seemed to him now to be compassionately brooding over it. Poetry and prose came into strange contact. The sight of the signs and advertisements along the line, which showed them they were nearing London, suddenly roused her after a long silence.

"You," she whispered to him, "who are sacrificing so much for me, if I had courage, I should say to you, Do not complete the sacrifice. As it is, I can only say, let me do my all to repay you for it. I never knew till to-day how much you really cared for me. It has been a day of happiness, and also a day of trouble."

"Trouble is to love," he replied, "what the night is to a star."

"Vauxhall!" shouted a voice outside. "Tickets ready—all tickets!"



They both laughed at the interruption, and their parting at the terminus had peace in it.

Next day they again shared a journey, moving away from London to the quiet of the Suffolk shores. The melancholy of yesterday, the anxieties and jarring incidents of the days preceding, gave to them now a feeling of exultation, as if they were escaping from some house of bondage; and as for the sacrifice which had so lately saddened both of them, he had forgotten he had to make, she, that she had to accept it.

The watering place they were bound for was little more than a fishing village, with some villas, an hotel, and a terrace of lodging-houses annexed to it; and though in its season cockneys swarmed like flies in it, now it was full of its own local silence. Two musty cabs, however, were waiting patiently at the station, whose drivers appeared even more surprised than pleased when two well-dressed strangers appeared and engaged both of them. Mrs. Schilizzi was to stay in lodgings that had been engaged by her sister. Grenville had, by telegraph, ordered rooms in the hotel. The two abodes were not very far apart. They both looked on a wind-swept down or common, fringing which was the beach and the shining sea. On this common they had arranged to meet in an hour; and Grenville saw at a glance that there would be no chance of their missing each other. They met. After the jars and noises of London, and the painful and precarious meetings which, straining the nerves of each and trying the temper, still left smarting traces of the pain that had been thus inflicted, the intense peacefulness which now surrounded them lay on their ears like velvet, and found its way into their souls.

The only sounds heard were intermittent and isolated—the occasional rattle of some solitary cart or van, or of one little yellow omnibus with the packages of some commercial traveler, the voices of a child or two playing, or of one man calling to another by name, or the fall of the waves which, long and slow and shining, curved into foam and fell on the shingle not far away. She took his arm confidently, with a frank temerity, and they went toward the beach, over the thin, pale-colored grass, crunching with their feet as they did so many a drifted shell. Scents of the sea moved and floated in the air, and their hearts were filled to overflowing with a deep tumultuous tranquillity. They sat on the shore; played with the pebbles and threw them; and watched the dove-colored clouds change their shapes on the horizon, and catch the gleams of sunset.

“To-morrow,” she said to him, “we will manage to dine together. This evening at six I must have tea with my little niece. You can dine meanwhile, and take me out again afterward.”

At a little distance was an old wooden pier, dilapidated, and looking like the ribs of some wrecked vessel. An hour or two later they walked to it, when it looked black in the moonlight, and they sat together almost silent on one of its crazy benches. The tide was full. There was a hush on the breathless waters; and the heart of each had the hush and fullness of the tide. At last, however, Grenville roused himself, and instead of fragmentary whispers, began to speak with a distinct and deliberate utterance, which might to a passing listener have sounded entirely commonplace, but to her was far more convincing than the customary murmurs of sentiment.

"Irma," he said, "I wish, not for the sake of vanity, that you would think over certain merits, which I may venture to think myself possessed of. I am a good man of business. Were there any occasion for my doing so, I could go this moment into many a city office, and amend the details of many a financial scheme. I have a keen sense of humor and a certain amount of cynicism. I think also I am a seasoned man of the world; and no one has known better than I how to value the world's advantages; and I am certainly not mad. But my love of you—I am not in the least exaggerating—has acted like an alchemist, suddenly transmuting life for me, and turning my estimate of things entirely topsy-turvy. What I would utter to you if I could in all the language of poetry, I repeat, I engross, in bald matter of fact prose, and in cold blood I affix my signature to it. Nero wished that the people had only one throat, that he might cut it. All the things I care for have only one pair of eyes; and they are close to me—close to me; I see them shining now. Irma," he continued, his voice growing gradually lower, "my heart is like a cathedral, where a lamp is always burning in your honor, and where sometimes in honor of you there is nothing but solemn silence, and sometimes the murmur of some new act of devotion. Do my words reach you, so as to make you feel their force? Or are they like a jet of water, which breaks into faint spray before it strikes the object it is aimed at? If this is so, you must come nearer and meet it."

"Don't," she exclaimed. "Don't. Your words not only strike, but penetrate; and my heart is so full of what they mean, and so jealous of losing it—that—what

shall I say? Bobby, I can hardly bear it. I am rather sad to-night. I will tell you why to-morrow."

To-morrow came; but the promise was not at once fulfilled. In the morning she was sad no longer. She was buoyed up on the tide of a triumphant happiness against which she could not struggle; and the horizon of the day before her was like that of a summer sea, which met heaven, and hid all the world beyond. Some hours she devoted to her little niece, doing for her all that could be done by the kindest mother; but every minute not thus occupied, she was with Grenville, full of a simple-hearted happiness which trouble dared not sully. But toward the evening her sadness returned again. They were sitting on the beach, watching some distant sails. Suddenly she said to him, "To-day you've been very good to me. You've not been angry with me because I've given so many hours to my niece; and yet I am sure it tried you. But you knew it was my duty; and you never once looked cross at me. I am so touched, dear, by all these little forbearances. And yet—O Bobby, Bobby, there is something I want to say to you. I wanted to say it last night, only I hardly knew how; and all to-day I've not wanted to say it at all."

"What is it?" he asked. She hesitated and blushed. She began to speak, and then stopped herself. What was in her mind Grenville could not conjecture; but one thing came better to his view than ever it had done before—the fact that for him she was guilelessly and defenselessly truthful. There was something almost painful in the degree to which this touched him—indeed the new and sudden call which it made on his care and

tenderness. "What is it?" he asked again. "Tell me. I shall understand, whatever it is."

"Yes," she said; "I indeed believe you will. You understand me too well; and it—you are too good to me. I think I can tell you now. You see, Bobby, my loving you—you see sometimes it's mere happiness, just as it's been to-day; and then at other times it overwhelms me and lifts me like a religion. It was like that last night, and it is so again now. And this is what I feel—if we weren't in a public place, I should like as I told you to hide my eyes on your shoulder. I feel that the higher and purer my love gets, it raises some standard in me by which I condemn myself; or at any rate, it makes doubts trouble me, which in more careless moods I can answer. Don't be angry with me. I blame myself, not you."

"I myself," he said, "am not free from trouble. When I put before myself our position in general terms, often and often I condemn it; but when I think of it as it really is, and when I think of you as a part of it, let me say what I may to myself, it is redeemed, and my blame falls powerless on it. But oh, Irma, I ought to say this to you: If you don't agree with me naturally, I don't want,—how difficult it is to say some things,—I don't want to cajole you with what your conscience may resent as sophisms."

"Dear," she said, "I did not mean to distress you. I believe at heart I feel exactly as you do; but my doubts will come at times, and I like to tell you everything. But this evening, Bobby, they have come, not, I think, on their own account, but merely because my spirits are getting a little low again. I have a sort of a presentiment that something bad will happen to-morrow;

and even if it doesn't, to-morrow is our last day here. The day after I shall have finished my business; and then I shall have to leave you and hurry back to my children. To leave you—that will be sad enough; but not even for your sake would I stay away from my children. Perhaps if they were here I should have none of these morbid fancies."

"Irma!" said Grenville, "what have you just been saying? Do you suppose that when you go I shall not go also? As long as your welfare will not suffer by it and as long as you will allow me, I mean never to leave you. And as to your children—I should hardly believe that I had any place in your heart, if that place in some ways were not subordinate to theirs."

When they parted that evening, "Please," she said, "don't fret about me. Your goodness, though it sometimes troubles me, always drives away each cloud of trouble it raises." That night she wrote: "What a strange thing is the conscience! It often seems to me like the ghost of Hamlet's father, its voice coming now from one place, now from another quite opposite, as if it were urging on me two different sets of arguments. What a lot of books—scientific books—I have read about it, long before I thought that, for my own peace of mind, I should ever have to consider how far they were true. I believe, however, that I am really learning one thing, which I had often heard before but never realized; and that is not what conscience is, but what a woman is. A woman can appreciate reasoning as well as a man can; but it is not by reasoning that she sees her own way in perplexity. I can reason, and say that I am breaking some ties which, if everybody broke, all society would be

ruined. But then, again, comes an answer, I learnt from *him*; that if everybody loved as we loved, all society would be elevated. I constantly tax myself with making Paul miserable. But then again comes the answer, that this misery is merely imaginary, that it is merely the creation of some conventional formula, for I am merely giving to another what is nothing but ~~dross~~ to him. So, too, I can apply to myself all these names, which are the first stones cast by self-constituted accusers. But against names like these I hardly care to defend myself; I know them to be so inapplicable that they hardly cause me uneasiness. All they do is to turn me away from argument, and drive me back to my own consciousness of myself, which, in spite of every argument, remains still the same, like a flame inside a lantern which no wind can agitate; and then I know that my heart is not impure, and that the hunger of my soul is not to be faithless but to be faithful; that in spite of all the little selfishnesses that sully one's daily life, I long to consecrate my whole being to *him*. Even as I write now, some voice of the spirit fills me. That would sound nonsense to many people; but to me it is full of meaning. Words—words! where are you? Come to me, help me. If a rose has blossomed I can see it. If an aloe has blossomed I can see it. I can see that under his influence I myself have blossomed. It's a fact. Why should I vex myself by insisting on it any farther? As for arguments, they must play at see-saw if they will. They will sometimes make me feel that there is nothing to be said for us; sometimes that there is nothing to be said against us. But whatever is proved, oh, you who have chosen me and whom I have chosen, I know that I

love you; and when I trust to my consciousness and my instincts, I feel that loving you was the first right thing I ever did, and that all hope and all elevation is contained in it."

Nor next day was her state of mind changed. The thought that this peaceful interval would so soon come to an end did, indeed, sadden both of them; but it was a sadness brooding over peace, like clouds over a quiet sea. The midday post, however, brought her a letter from London, bearing many stamps on it, and darkened with redirections. "It is something from Paul!" she exclaimed. Her cheeks flushed as she read it. "His work at Smyrna is nearly done," she said presently, "and—what is this? There are some new waterworks at Bucharest, for which the firm has a contract. He will be going there in three weeks. He supposes that I and the children are in Vienna or with the Princess; and as soon as he is able to do so, he will come to us."

She dropped the letter on her lap and looked at Grenville silently. "Of course," she said at last, "it must have happened sooner or later; but sometimes, Bobby, sometimes one forgets things."

"If you," he replied, "are as serious as I am, we both of us have to face a difficult and painful situation. I have known this all along; still, when a thing comes close, of course at first one shudders at it; but even if our path grows stony, do not the less lean on me."

As he spoke her smile again came back to her, but she only acknowledged his words by her sudden look of happiness. He felt that this gave him a new insight into her character. He felt that many things in her behavior, many little cases of what seemed neglect and careless-



ness, were due not to any want of recognition on her part, but to foregone conclusions that he would take her recognition for granted. And so through all that day, though a certain sadness filled it, a happiness reigned which the sadness only deepened. They arranged to dine late, so as to catch the last glow of the evening; and again they sat on the shore together, playing with the pebbles and the seaweed, and watching the waves fall. Everything on which their eyes rested was steeped in a pathetic beauty, which did not come from the sunset, though that indeed was beautiful, but which comes at any hour to things seen for the last time. She had been repeating some random fragments of poetry. Once or twice she had quoted a line wrong, and he laughed at her. Some sorts of ridicule are more tender than a caress. For one verse especially he insisted on finding fault with her. It was an English verse of eight syllables, and ought to have run thus:

See, on the shore the waters fall.

She, however, turned waters into "waves," and he tried to convince her how halting she made the meter. Presently a thought struck him.

See, on the shore the waves fall !

he repeated. "Do you know in itself that meter is pretty? I can't tell why, but my thoughts at this moment are in tune with it. Irma, be quiet a moment, and I will set them to the music of your mistake." He borrowed a pencil of her, and the back of an envelope; and now murmuring to himself, and now writing, he was occupied while she watched him. "Listen to this," he said

at last. She leaned her hand on his shoulder, and watched his hasty scribblings as he read :

See, in the west the day fails;  
Low on the sands the waves sound ;  
Slow on the down the lean sails  
Of the mill drift round.

See, in the west is one star !  
See, a day we have found fair  
Is leaving the things that still are  
For the things that once were.

Hold me fast by your true hand ;  
Turn away from the changed sea,  
Our day forsakes the forlorn land,  
Never forsake *me* !

## CHAPTER XVII.

"I AM alone. I now have time for reflection, undisturbed by those anxieties which, when she was at Hampstead, almost every day and hour were the blot-like shadows of my hopes. I shall follow her soon ; but she has been obliged to rejoin her children ; and I must remain here in London for yet another week or so, in order to complete the sale of my property. As for that, the bitterness of death is past. Not yet legally, but still, so far as I am concerned, finally, the matter is settled. My family is come to an end. It has no home, and no future. My own feeling at present is much like that of a man who has just lost his teeth, and whose mouth is strange to him ; or who has just lost a limb, and still feels it aching. If Lady Ashford could read this diary, which was begun at her suggestion, what a triumph it would be to her ! And yet, once or twice, though I hardly like to record it, this doubt has come to me. I have asked myself whether, one fine morning, I shall not wake up, and find that all this conduct of mine has been that of a drunken man who has half undressed himself in the street, and has made himself forever a laughing-stock to himself and his friends also. Yes—I have asked myself this ; but the same answer is always—always—reiterated—that I am not like such a drunken man, but that I see clearly ; and that the treasure which I thus deliberately choose, is for

me; as a human soul, worth more than anything which I give up for it.

"Indeed I am so far from being mad or drunk that I have not even lost my ordinary prudence. For the one relation who depends on me, I have taken care that all provision shall be made. As for myself, I shall, when she dies, be rather better off than I have been : and I shall for the present be a little, but not much poorer. I shall make up for that by leaving these rooms next autumn, and taking some that are cheaper. Six weeks ago, my prospects were somewhat different. I had then before me visions of big houses, and servants; and all the life that goes with them. Yes—yes—I know quite well what I am losing. No miser, unwillingly counting over his coins as he pays them, knows better.

"As I think all this over, I sometimes fancy that I am listening to two inward disputants arguing, and I smile as I listen, because I know which will win. One attacks me as depraved, wicked, and foolish ; the other defends me, taking up every point, curiously, coolly, and fairly, and disposes of it. The attacking party—the counsel for the prosecution, is extremely furious and voluble ; and there are two qualities in his rhetoric that at first intimidated me. He laid down all his propositions as if no one could question them, and they were all of them propositions I had certainly heard before. He said, ' You are ruining the happiness of a home ; you are betraying a friend ; you are wronging a man who has trusted you, and who has never injured you.' And he went on in this way till he was out of breath. Then the other began, taking every point in order. ' Ruining the happiness of a home ! ' he exclaimed. ' What does that mean ? The

home in question had none of that happiness which the conduct now in question could ruin. Weak, indeed, must be the case of a prosecution, when one of its most formidable arguments rests upon something which is, in this case, a mere conventional fiction—some Richard Roe, or some John Doe of morality. If the happiness of a home has been here affected in any way, it has been rather repaired than ruined. Betraying a friend,' the counsel for the defense continues. 'Here is another fiction—not a fiction in some cases, but a fiction here; and yet always assumed conventionally, whether true or not.' And then the counsel, turning to the jury, which is myself, says, 'the arguments we have just been listening to pretend to be those of the conscience. They illustrate a fact I have very often suspected, namely, that much which passes for conscience, or a man's own inmost voice, is not what it seems to be. It is not what he says about himself—he who knows all the circumstances; but what he thinks other people would say—people who could know only a part of them, and that part the least important. It is not the voice of your own judgment on yourself, but your hypothetical anticipation of how other people would misjudge you.' In many cases I am convinced that this is absolutely true. The counsel for the prosecution is furious. He drops the tone of argument, adopts that of a sermon, and quotes various phrases which either have no meaning, or derive it from an assumption that the text of the New Testament is inspired. Instantly the other one interrupts him. 'Stop,' he says, 'for a moment. Recollect yourself, and be consistent. What is your attitude toward dogmatic Christianity? Do you believe that, directly or indirectly, the words of the New

Testament come from some miraculous source? Will you stake your spiritual existence on the truth of the Nicene Creed, of the doctrine of verbal inspiration, of the infallible and supernatural authority of patristic and other traditions? Not you. Rightly or wrongly you assent to the scientific methods of the age; and none of these doctrines for you are more than facts of history. How do you dare then—is this your spiritual honesty—to bully me with texts and opinions, whose authority you yourself deny? The fear which you seek to raise in me, and which, if you could raise it, you would attribute to conscience, would indeed be fear exactly as described by Solomon—it would be a *betrayal of the succors that reason offereth.* At this point, matters take a new turn. The prosecutor shifts his ground, and goes back to reason. ‘Suppose,’ he says, ‘I admit your arguments to be right in your own case, that your own personal conscience has not full grounds for condemning you, yet what would be the result were this to be admitted generally? Everyone would apply this admission to himself, to justify any caprice, however depraved or wanton. He could persuade himself that it applied to his circumstances just as well as to yours.’ ‘My friend,’ the other answers, ‘all that you say sounds admirable, till you come to examine the sense of it. The sense of what you just have urged, if it has any sense, is this: that we must submit to the verdict of conscience in cases where we know it to be wrong, for fear that others should not submit to it in cases where it would be right.”

“And so they go on—these arguing voices within me; and I listen to them with an interest in their general bearing which sometimes makes me forget that they have

any reference to myself. And then when I remember that they have, and it all again becomes personal, I am tempted to ask myself whether my real conscience must not be dead in me, whether I have not lost my perception of right and wrong, of depravity and elevation, if I allow myself to remain doubtful in so grave a matter. I put the question to myself with complete fairness, and out of the depths of my conscience, or consciousness, comes always the same answer. There is a passion that degrades, and there is a passion that raises. Mine is the passion that raises. How do I know this? By its fruits I know it. And what are its fruits? It has given to fidelity a meaning I never before conceived. It has made fidelity a part not only of every action, but of every thought. It has nerved me not only for great sacrifices, which once made are made forever, but for all those self-restraints and self-denials, for which occasion is always arising, and in which the larger sacrifices are repeated daily. It has shown me that the truest pleasures of life are the simplest. It has given wings to the flesh, which have fanned themselves into the world of the spirits. It has touched corruption, and corruption has put on incorruption. If anyone would understand natural religion, let him understand a natural love like mine. This is that hidden well to which all the pleasures and virtues and faiths and aspirations, repairing, in their golden urns draw light. It contains everything that can make us value life, and regret yet be resigned to death."

So wrote Grenville on the day of Mrs. Schilizzi's departure. That evening he went out to a party, not that he was inclined for society, but that he feared the weight of solitude. When he returned to his rooms he turned

again to his diary, and, with trouble marked on his forehead, he proceeded to write thus :

"On many occasions, but more especially when I have been a passenger in some great ocean steamer, and have watched the beauty of its lines as it cut the waves, and the ceaseless sliding flash of its huge machinery, the measured reeling of those towers of steel, the cylinders, the rise and fall of the burnished piston-rods, the sway of the returning cranks—rising and falling, turning and returning, all fulfilling faithfully their appointed courses, I have been lost in wonder at the perfect skill of man. And then—I have thought of man as we all know him, imperfect ; and again and again I have said this to myself : What men make is so much better than what they do ; what they do is so much worse than what they are. To-night I have felt this bitterly as regards myself. In these pages, but an hour or two ago, I talked of my fidelity, which went through all my acts and thoughts. And now to-night—what wayward devil was in me ? miserable as I was, smarting as I was with the sense of *her* absence, I have allowed myself to take some sort of alien pleasure in the eyes of other women. Each time it was for a moment only. It was a poor little starved emotion, which I stamped upon every moment it showed itself. And yet, if she knew of this, I should be ashamed. And mentally, among all those people, I kept saying to her, 'Irma, forgive me ; I am yours, and yours only.' I won't write more about these misdeeds. Never till now would they have seemed to me misdeeds at all. What to you, Irma, seems an infidelity I should have looked on as fidelity to any other woman. This occurs to me. Suppose, in this diary, I were to be absolutely unreserved,



telling all my minutest faults, even to those of each dwarfed impulse, not only would another, reading it, think me worse than I am, but I should probably myself think so. We should both of us probably think that I was vain-glorious in describing my virtues; and the more candid I was in confessing my sins, that the more remained behind, being too shameful for confession. If one man, or only a few men are candid in this way, they are certain to be misjudged thus. They will seem to be worse than others, only because they are more honest. And yet, if only a few men would with absolute truth give us some record of the workings of their consciences, what advances in knowledge might be made.

"Irma, you will never see this. These words will never reach you; but before I go to bed let me solemnly swear this to you—that if you could see the whole of my heart and soul, these sins which, small as they are, I repent so bitterly, would not destroy your faith in me, or make you think me less wholly yours. All my life turns to you. All my life depends on you."

Mrs. Schilizzi's plans were to go at once to the Princess and bring the children back again to the hotel in the forest; and there, as soon as he could do so, Grenville was to rejoin her. It would be a day or two, therefore, before he could count on hearing from her, although even on the second, though he knew she would be spending it in the train, he fondly hoped that she might manage to dispatch a line to him. He knew that under the same circumstances he would do so to her. But no line came. The disappointment could not be said to have taken away the sunlight from him, but for all that it did take away the sunshine. He went mechanically about his

melancholy legal business. He dined out as if he had been dining in a dream, and he knew no happiness till, weary, he went to bed, hoping that sleep would hurry him to a letter from her next morning. There was one. It was written hastily ; most of it was mere fragmentary news, but there was a phrase or two, and a sentence that breathed affection, filling him with a sense of it like a box of spikenard broken. That day was a happy one, except for one discovery which it brought to him—that his business would keep him in London for ten days instead of for a week ; but this was again counterbalanced by his news from Mrs. Schilizzi. Her husband, she had just heard in Vienna, would be later in returning than he anticipated ; so they would at all events have some time in which to set their house in order.

That day was a happy one, but the next was a total blank. There was not so much as a line from her. Then came a weary third. Again there was no letter. He had written every day, pouring out to her every thought of his heart. He had hardly been able to bring himself to close his envelopes, and cease sending his voice to her. Like Dante's souls in purgatory, up till now he had been "contented in the flame," but this third day's silence was more than his nerves could bear. No one watching him, no one talking to him, as he went through his business, and dined out, would have guessed, from his acuteness in the one case and his flow of conversation in the other, that a tooth sharper than the serpent's was gnawing him under his shirt and waistcoat. A week went by before he had heart to continue his diary, and when he did so, his record of that week was as follows :

"Of all physical maladies perhaps the most acute is

seasickness, and yet none receives so little pity. With regard to the pains of the soul, the heart, the spirit—the devil knows what to call it—I am beginning to see that the same thing holds good. Some of the most pitiable are those that would be least pitied. I think this week I have been almost mad sometimes, and even now my temper gets into my pen, and I talk of the devil before I know what I am doing. I am a fool—a fool; and yet I am not a coward, for to all the world I have shown an unruffled front. But—fool I must be; for what is the cause of my wretchedness? Merely that a woman in ten days has written only three times to me, and one of these times only three careless lines. What a trifling calamity that sounds to one who reads of it! but to me who feel it—what has it meant to me? Here is a woman for whose sake I am renouncing everything. I am remaining in London for no other reason than to complete the death of my ambition, and the act that will make me homeless. And through every hour of the day her image has haunted me. Every thought I have thought I have mentally brought to her, as some Catholic votarist lays flowers upon an altar. The one occupation that has brought me any real comfort has been to write to her. All my hours of exertion have been like steps to that hour which was dedicated to this writing. And each day all my hopes naturally were to hear from her. I have been accustomed to reason with myself from my own experience, and knowing how to write to her is for me a daily necessity, how every day I am straitened till this is accomplished, I cannot but conclude that unless her affection were decreasing, to write to me would be an equal necessity for her.

"Two of her letters have been almost worse than none—evidences of carelessness far more than of care. I was patient at first, though disappointed: but at last the gathering pain burst out in my mind like a fountain of bitter water. Much as I long to be honest, I cannot, for very shame's sake, commit to paper all the things I have said about her; and I cannot, for another reason—because no words could express it—commit to paper the misery in which I said them. But the kind of judgment which in these moods I must have passed upon her, I can describe in general terms. Just as her connection with myself has been ennobled and sanctified in my eyes, by my believing it, as I have done, to be the result of a serious passion, so the moment I was tempted to consider that passion a caprice, not even strong enough to have the semblance of unselfishness, her whole conduct and character have entirely changed their aspect. My devotion to her has turned into a sort of surprised contempt, to be equaled only by my own contempt for myself.

"Stay, stay. It will be perhaps as well if I do actually record one or two specimens of my accusations against her. I have said 'Here am I, who am giving up all my life to her: and she will not sacrifice for me even five minutes out of the day.' I have said also, 'And does she feel it a sacrifice to write to me? If she does, by feeling so, she shows the sacrifice worthless.' Again, I have imagined myself saying this to her: 'The things you value in life, you value in this order—first, your children, then your clothes, then your comfort—and after your comfort, you have fancied you valued me.'

"And day by day, while she was forcing me to think like this of her, I was completing for her sake the sui-

render of all my worldly prospects. Had I been forced to be solitary, I think I should have gone mad. I have been constantly mixing in society by way of a counter-irritant ; and the kindness I have met in the world has seemed such a strange thing to me, when compared with her cruelty for whom I am giving the world up. A few nights ago, at a concert, whom should I meet but Lady Evelyn Standish. Was she different, or was I different, from what I or she was at Vicenza ? It seemed to me that there was a deeper welcome in her eyes. She took evident pleasure in being with me. She contrived to dismiss civilly everyone who attempted to interrupt us ; and I remained at her side, talking to her all the evening. And I thought, 'I am giving you up for that hard, thankless woman !' And yet, all that evening, not for a single moment did I let voice or look convey any thought or feeling, which was more than a friend might have conveyed, or by which that hard, thankless woman would have been wronged.

"Were my mood, as I write this, the mood I have been just describing, I should never have had the heart to make so miserable a confession. But I have as yet told only half my story. I have said that I—I myself—have been accusing her. It was not I, but some pack of rebellious voices in me—wolves of the spirit, which, in lacerating her, lacerated me first. As for me—as for my real self—I was ashamed that the purlieus of my mind should harbor such beasts of prey ; and day by day I fought with them, beating them down, and striking them into silence. How quickly they sprang up again ! Again, I struck them down.

"I strengthened myself for this struggle in three days

—first, by thinking how unworthy it was of me, as a man, to allow myself to be so savagely disturbed by anything ; secondly, by thinking how, even were the worst I could impute to her true, there was still in her goodness and tenderness, as to which I could not have been deceived, and how, if she needed forgiveness, I should find peace in forgiving her ; and lastly, by making myself the advocate of her cause, and seeing how much might be said that would altogether justify her. I urged on my own attention how far harder, for many reasons, it probably was for her to write, than for me. I argued that the shortness of her letters might be a sign of trust in me rather than of indifference; showing her to believe that, even in a few hasty words, I should see the affection whose existence she never dreamed of my doubting. I said to myself again, that, under certain circumstances, an affection sure of itself, and sure of the desired return, felt the need of writing less than an affection less deep and trusting : and I also reminded myself of a fact of my own experience—that once or twice, though all day I had been writing letters to her mentally, the actual composition of one had been an effort even to myself.

“ In this way I have reduced my mind to order, though I am still smarting after the conflict. Irma, I feel that I owe you so much more than a man owes a woman under other and more fortunate conditions. I want to subdue pride, and selfishness, and evil temper. I want to offer to you all this self-conquest, though you never know what it has cost me, or reward me by any recognition of it. And yet how easily you might—how easily make it, would you only treat me with a kindness which surely would cost you nothing. Of these three last letters you have written

me, the last has been really kind, short as it was. Your image, which had almost vanished from me, or become distorted, came close to me and was clear again. The strife in my heart was hushed. The bitter waters became sweet."

A little later he added this : " Even if at times I pass out of her mind, and she is not conscious that she feels I am of much value to her, it does not follow that she really is shallow and inconstant. What seems indifference is often merely security ; just as rich men often proclaim themselves, and think themselves, indifferent to their riches, and yet if asked to part with them, would not yield up a penny ; and if robbed of them would be miserable. As such men love their riches, so I will believe that she loves me. I am coming to see that men may control their judgments ; that judgments which are false are being perpetually suggested to us ; and that sometimes we can hold to the true only by an act of will, which enables us to stop our ears to the words of the false witness within us."

Next day, he continued : " At last—at last, I am happier. I have heard again from her—it is true, a few lines only ; but still they showed that she cannot be really changed. She is at Lichtenbourg with her children and the Princess. There have been, she says, no more cases of scarlatina. The place is pronounced safe ; and she has told the Princess that I shall be there shortly. My work in London is at last over. The fatal papers will be sent to me at Lichtenbourg for my signature ; and at last I am free. I leave England to-morrow.'

## CHAPTER XVIII.

As Grenville returned to Lichtenbourg, he could not help contrasting his journey *from* it, in Mrs. Schilizzi's company, with his present journey, in the company of nothing but his thoughts. It is true he was now hopeful, but his life was hope tempered with anxiety ; whereas, on the former occasion, though trouble was confronting both of them, they had hardly had more than a slight foretaste of those minute estrangements which, without killing their affection, had since then inflicted on it the shocks of repeated deaths. He hardly knew then the look of her face in anger. Now he had eaten of the tree of knowledge, and he knew. At Vienna, however, where he was obliged to pass the night, he was greeted at his hotel by a letter from her, telling him how she longed for his arrival. The phraseology, it is true, struck him as a little conventional ; but he remembered that she had to be prudent, and he was satisfied. The following day, as he sat in the dusty railway carriage, the thought of her welcome in the evening shone through his mind like sunlight ; the nearer he got to her, the more did his doubts evaporate ; and nothing disturbed him till, reaching a certain junction, he found that his train had just missed its connection, and that he would be three hours late in reaching his destination. This *contretemps*, however annoying in itself, constituted, at all events, a valuable counter-irritant, which precluded the recrudescence of any sentimental sorrows ;



and when at last the later train, by which he was to proceed, arrived, Fate had arranged for him another and more agreeable distraction.

"I was still chafing inwardly," he thus wrote in his diary, "when Fritz, who had tried vainly to find an empty compartment for me, ushered me into one which had but a single occupant. This was a man who, despite the warmth of the weather, had with him, though not on him, a magnificent rug of sables. The rug was what first struck me ; but only a moment later I saw some more magnificence in the shape of a gorgeous dressing-bag. The possessor of all these splendors was himself oddly in keeping with them. In point of age he seemed a well-preserved seventy. His grizzled hair was curly ; his grizzled mustaches waxed ; one ungloved hand showed a number of turquoise rings ; and there gleamed in his eyes, and lurked in his many wrinkles, a seasoned charity toward misconduct, which evidently began at home. It was necessary for me to exchange one or two remarks with him, in connection with the moving of some packages ; and I saw at once that I was talking to a polished man of the world. I suppose his perception paid me a similar compliment ; for, presently producing a cigarette-case that was gilt and jeweled, and sparkled most aggressively with the balls of a monstrous coronet, he offered me a cigarette, which, the moment I had taken a puff at it, I found to be more delicate than anything I before had tasted. Nothing fomented confidence so much as fine tobacco. This, my companion told me, came from Egypt, where he gave me to understand he had means of securing what was choicest. I myself have been once or twice in Cairo, and I mentioned the names of several

people connected with it. They were people of high position—travelers, financiers, diplomats, fashionable visitors, and friends of the late Khedive. The stranger knew all of them by name, and most of them personally. He had begun talking in French. His French was perfect; but he presently saw I was an Englishman, and began talking English. His English was equally good, except perhaps for the accent. I discovered that he knew London. He had been there for six weeks once. His acquaintance had not been large, but it seemed to have consisted exclusively of royal personages, of diplomats, and some of the ultra-fashionable stars of society. Presently the name cropped up of our own ambassador at Vienna. My companion knew him intimately. I said that he was a friend of my own. My companion, whose keen eyes had caught my name on a luggage label, at once assumed a smile of mixed surprise and gratification, and flattered my sense of importance by asking me if I were myself. I told him I was. 'And you know,' he asked, 'Lady Ashford?' On my saying I did, he went on, 'She is coming to stay with me. I have an old castle not very far from Lichtenbourg.' A sudden light broke on me. This must be the Pasha or the devil. Perhaps he was both; he at any rate proved to be the former. I told him I had visited his castle, and that I was now going to Lichtenbourg. He begged me before I left to come for a few days and stay with him. I said, if I could I would. He little knew how unlikely I was to do so.

"When we reached our station, I was annoyed to find that this late train was met by no conveyance from Lichtenbourg. There was one carriage only—a large break, with some coronets on it, whose balls looked like

rows of brass-headed nails, and with four milk-white horses. The Pasha, discovering my plight, offered to take me with him, and send me over to Lichtenbourg the following morning; adding, what proved to be quite true, that there was rain in the clouds, and that I had better make sure of shelter. I thanked him, but declined his offer. Irma, I knew, would even now be waiting for me, and all my heart was famished for the sight of her. I told Fritz to go to a neighboring posting-house and secure anything on wheels—if even an open cart—which would bring my luggage, and that I would walk on before him. I had a small bag containing a change of clothing, which I slung over my back, and prepared to set out on my pilgrimage. At this moment some drops began to fall, the air grew rapidly colder, and mixed with the rain came hail. For a moment I doubted whether I would go in this coming downpour. But my doubts were only momentary; and to the dismay of Fritz I went. I was soon drenched. The rain blinded me, the hail stung me. In half an hour the roads were turning into quagmires, and darkness was coming before its time. I thought I should never arrive. I began to grow bewildered, and once or twice I thought I had lost my way. But at last I arrived. I hurried through the clipped alleys; I reached the well-known hotel. It was ten o'clock. I pushed the doors open roughly, and showed myself blinking in the hall, an object so strange and weather-beaten that a writer and a man from the bureau hurried out, ready to eject me. At last I was recognized; and though they probably thought me mad, they showed me to the room I had ordered, where I hastily changed my things, and then demanded to be shown to the salon of

Mrs. Schilizzi and the Princess. I entered. Irma was sitting at the table listlessly, not expecting me, and not looking up at first. When she did look up, a cry of delight broke from her. It seemed to me that I had, not seen her for years; her voice at first seemed strange. So did her face too. I seemed to have lost the clew to it. For a moment or two we were embarrassed; and then—we looked at each other, and were reunited. Yes—yes; but what happened then? She took my hand and held it. I did not think that that would be all. Some other seal of welcome, some other touch with healing in it—she saw that I expected this; but all in a second, like the writing on Belshazzar's wall, a frown appeared on her forehead, and she almost pushed me from her. 'How *can* you be so silly,' she exclaimed, in a stinging emphatic whisper. 'My aunt's in the next room. Have you absolutely no consideration for me?' I felt that this was unjust. Her conduct at this moment was far more likely to reach the ears of the Princess than the gift of a noiseless moment, which would have satisfied me. 'You know,' she went on, still chilling me by her accent, 'you know that I am glad to see you. But it would have been far better had you managed to come earlier, or else had put off calling on us till some time to-morrow morning.' At this moment the door of the neighboring room opened, and in bustled the Princess, her face wrinkled with smiles. She asked me how it was I had managed to come so late. I told her about the trains. I told her also that I had walked. 'Walked!' she exclaimed; 'and in this rain; and all these long nine miles!' I said I had told her niece that I hoped to join them at dinner, and so was determined to reach them in time

to excuse myself that night for my absence. As I said this, I was aware that Irma started ; and I felt that her eyes were fixed on me with a new expression. I met them in one rapid look, and they were full of a repenting tenderness. And now, too, her voice came musical to my ears with solicitude, as she exclaimed to her aunt, 'And most likely he's had no dinner. Do let us ring, and see if we can't get something here.'

"The Princess assented. She also was full of kindness ; but just at this juncture Fritz appeared at the door, announcing not only that he had arrived and the luggage, but also that a supper for me was ready in my own room. Till a moment ago I had no knowledge that I was hungry. But the change in Irma's manner, I suppose by restoring peace to me, left me free to listen to the cries of appetite. I was more than hungry. I was faint, indeed ; and, confessing as much, I left them, receiving as I went from Irma's hand and eyes an assurance whose charm made every nerve cease aching. Weary as I am with my walk, and disposed to sleep as I am by the supper which I have just mentioned, I have written all this before going to bed, inspired by that happiness which her last look conveyed to me. Irma, so long as you are true to me, I can bear anything ; and I can see ahead of us many things that must be borne. Let us try together so to bear all, that what is ignoble [in many cases may not be so in ours. Irma, during the days which we still have to ourselves, never quarrel with me—never move aside from me. Watch with me. Is there in the heart of things any reason why I should not say, *Pray with me ?* I shall see you, I shall be with you, to-morrow, and to-morrow, and

to-morrow, and many to-morrows afterward, uninterrupted. Be to me what you always have been ! ”

· This parting prayer, though it never reached the person to whom it was addressed, was, during the next few days, at all events, partially though not entirely answered by her. She never quarreled with Grenville. The daggers which he discovered she could use were all hid in their sheaths ; but the old frankness of her intercourse with him was, except on rare occasions, troubled by a certain nervousness, which was not far from irritability, and often only escaped it by taking the form of preoccupation. The proximate cause of this was evidently the presence of the Princess, from whose company they could only escape for limited and precarious intervals. People who judge of the lives of others from a distance are accustomed to quote the proverb, “ Where there’s a will there’s a way ; ” and to affirm that if somebody had but really wished it, he or she could, of course, have done so-and-so. Such critics of conduct entirely fail to realize how strong are the fetters, fine and invisible though they may be, which the most trivial of social circumstances can sometimes weave around us ; and Grenville and Mrs. Schilizzi constantly found now that a *tête-à-tête* was as wholly beyond their reach as if for the time being there were a whole ocean between them. He, however, could not get rid of the feeling that the difficulties which beset them were sometimes unnecessarily increased by a perverse timidity on her part, the suspicion of which pained and troubled him. Still, in spite of all this, hardly a day passed on which they did not secure at least an hour together—either in the sitting room, when the Princess was enjoy-

ing her siesta, or elsewhere some seat in the gardens lurked among sequestered leafage.

During these interviews the last thing with which he could tax her was hardness, but at moments he was conscious on her part of a certain gentle shrinking from him, and her eyes appealed to him as if full of some unuttered truth which, it seemed, she longed to tell him, pleading with him for encouragement to do so. As for him, he vacillated between two moods—a mood of dumb compassion in which passion was absorbed and lurked, and which brought him close to her by a road untried hitherto ; and a mood of rebellious sadness caused by the unfortunate contrast between her old remembered frankness and their struggles and dim estrangements.

At last she began to give him some clew to her feelings. They were seated, as they often were, in the gardens. "Bobby," she began. He looked at her. Her eyes had tears in them. She glanced round her hastily to see that there was no one near, and took his hand, as if she were clinging to his sympathy. "Bobby," she began again, and her voice was oddly tremulous, "I wonder what you would do supposing that this happened—supposing that some day you were to discover I had become very good. Would you cease to care for me? Would you go quite away from me?"

His only answer was "No."

"I expect you would," she said. "Not at first, perhaps ; but later. It would necessarily make some difference."

"Will you be patient," he said, "and let me answer you slowly ; and if you find me hesitating in my phrases, believe me that the reason is this—I am not trying to hide my

thoughts, but to find them. Yes," he resumed, after a pause, "you are right. It would make a difference. It wouldn't destroy my affection for you; but I think that for that very reason it would separate us. Irma, what I am saying might, to a gross mind, seem to bear quite a base and selfish sense; but the gross mind would quite misapprehend me. How shall I pick my words? Listen; let me put it like this. We are accustomed to speak of ourselves as souls and bodies; and when affection is slight and passion strong, we are for practical purposes thus divisible, and we can, if we will it, sacrifice either element to the other. But when affection is not slight, but fills and absorbs the soul, the soul then fills and absorbs the body; and the body is to this transfigured affection what the brain is to the intellect. Low and high, good and bad—you cannot cut up a unity into such divisions as these. Some people may say that it is nobler to think than to eat; but without doing the one, we never shall do the other."

She watched him as he spoke, considering every word, far out of reach of the hiss of any impure propriety, her heart not insulting her cheeks with the indecency of a blush. She was face to face with the eternal mysteries of existence—not a body, not a ghost, but a woman; and the eyes with which she watched him were, in the words of Byron, "All youth, but with an aspect beyond time." He saw that she expected him to continue. "I think," he said, "thus far I know my meaning clearly; but when I come to the practical application of it, I am doubtful. I should incline to say that I couldn't part from you by halves, and yet again by no arguments of mine would I try to sway your conscience against your will. I could bear, Irma, any change in your conduct so long as it meant



no change in your disposition toward me : and yet, if our dispositions remain unchanged—however I argue, I am brought back to this—our only course is to part or to change nothing.”

“Dear,” she said gently, “I haven’t the strength to change. But I must teach you a new lesson. You must pity as well as love me.”

This conversation left Grenville full of trouble, and presented his whole conduct in a new and ghastly light to him. So far indeed as it was conduct concerning himself only, his judgment of it was in no way altered ; but if she were becoming unhappy on account of her own partnership in it, her unhappiness, he felt, would be his work. So long as she was at peace with herself, her attachment to him might be raising her ; but the moment she despised herself on account of it, she would sink, and he with her. And in that case he asked himself what course would be open to him ? To abandon her and to remain with her seemed equally fraught with misery. These considerations gathered in his mind like clouds ; but before they had done more than cast some advancing shadows, Mrs. Schilizzi’s quiet seemed to have come back to her ; and Grenville’s storm floated away and evaporated. That evening, when he was playing a game of chess with her, she said :

“I agree with you quite in all that you said this morning. You took me too seriously ; and yet I am glad you did—because else I should not have heard you explain the matter so clearly.”

“What is he explaining ?” said the Princess, looking up from her book. “Are you two turning into philosophers over your game ?”

"We were puzzled by a problem," said Grenville, "and have now solved it by experience."

Next day, when they found themselves alone in the garden, Mrs. Schilizzi alluded to this slight incident.

"You see," she said, "how careful one ought to be. My aunt's ears are like needles. When I first met you I would have sat with you and whispered with you for hours, if you would have condescended to do so, without a thought or fear of either my aunt or anyone. But now—— This is our seat; I am tired, Bobby. Let us sit down. You did the talking yesterday. Let me do it to-day. As I told you, dear, I have thought over all you said; and I agree with it; and oh, believe me, I don't want you to go. I think that yesterday I gave you a wrong impression; and I think I was wrong about my own meaning, myself. I think that what has been troubling me chiefly these last few days, has not been the thought of sin; for to-day, as much as ever, I feel that my soul has been made alive through you. But—I wonder if you would understand? You are not a woman. How should you? And for you things are all so different."

He protested that this was not so. She shook her head sadly; and not without an effort, continued:

"As to the way in which most people would condemn me, in that way I don't condemn myself, and I don't pretend to. The hypocrisy of self-condemnation is as bad as the hypocrisy of self-approval. But what I feel is this. Till lately I had nothing that I cared to conceal from anyone; and now, as you saw in London, and as you again see here, I am obliged to conceal things even from my mother-in-law and my aunt; and by and by,

Bobby, all this will be worse. Naturally I am so very simple. I like all things—even my sorrows—to be straightforward; and this seems to be destroying the simplicity of my life. I am not ashamed of loving you; nor am I ashamed of wronging Paul, for it is impossible for me to believe that I am doing so; but I am ashamed—or at least, dear, I am troubled—by the thought of having to live with half my frankness gone.”

“I hate a lie,” he answered, “just as much as you do. It seems to reduce me to the level of a naughty school-boy. And yet, at the same time, if any inquisitive stranger were to ask me questions as to my private matters, I should lie to him without the smallest compunction, if I could not baffle him otherwise. Were there anything humiliating in conduct of this kind, no honorable man would be able to have a secret. Even the Early Christians, in times of persecution, though if questioned with regard to their faith they were, of course, bound to bear witness to it, were expressly forbidden to let it be so much as suspected unnecessarily. If our faith to one another has any of those qualities in it, which we believe it to have, we may hope to protect it, without stooping to a denial of it. We shall not, for that reason, lead a life that is externally easier; but at least we shall keep unsullied our own self-respect; and that is a talisman which will save us at least from one thing—that voluntary parting, more bitter than any enforced one, which is caused when two, who have clung together faithfully, discover at last that neither is worth the faith of the other.”

## CHAPTER XIX.

**THAT** same evening, she had one moment alone with him. She looked thoughtful, but much happier.

"Do you know," she said to him hastily, "what you do when you tell me things? You seem to cut an alley through a wood that I thought impassable, and I see suddenly a gleam of light at the end."

"More philosophy!" exclaimed the Princess, entering. "Come, come. We ordered dinner at seven. Give me your arm, Bobby Grenville, and let me totter along with you to the restaurant."

They were later than most of the company; and there were many people departing before their own meal had arrived at its middle stage. The Princess was studying the moving figures through her spectacles, when she suddenly, in her penetrating voice, exclaimed:

"Baron, Baron, won't you look at me?"

A tall, grizzled man started, and then caught sight of her. They shook hands effusively. She asked him how long he had been at Lichtenbourg. He said for two days, and that that night he was leaving.

"You know my niece?" said the Princess.

The Baron turned and looked at her.

"Of course," he said; "but I have not met you since you were married. Once or twice I have seen you walking with your husband, and I wondered if my mind was deceiving me when it whispered that I had the honor of

knowing you. Will you have the goodness to present me to Herr von Schilizzi?"

Grenville, despite every effort, was conscious that his brows contracted; and though as a matter of fact his color changed but little, he felt that his face must be hot with indignant protest. It seemed to him for the moment as if someone had stripped him of his clothes, and forced on him those of this mongrel Greek tradesman. The mistake was corrected almost as soon as made; and his vanity was soothed by finding that this stranger recognized his name when it was mentioned, and bowed to him with evident deference. But Mrs. Schilizzi had noted every change in his expression; and after the Baron had gone, she became absorbed and silent. The manner of the Princess, too, though he did not notice it at the time, underwent, as he reflected afterward, an almost imperceptible change.

"The Baron," she said to him presently, "has a beautiful old castle in Styria. There is hardly a roof that doesn't let in the rain, and hardly a table with more than three legs. It's so old and dirty that I'm sure you should have a look at it."

Grenville felt that this allusion to his tastes was not very sympathetic; and before dinner was over he became a trifle embarrassed by the Princess asking him what other antiquities he would visit, and when his official engagements would be taking him back to London. A doubt came to him, for a single passing moment, as to whether his continuance in Lichtenbourg could have struck her as in any way curious; and instinct rather than reason at once supplied him with a defense. As to his return to London, some vague answer was sufficient.

"But as to old castles," he went on good-naturedly, "I have been asked to be a guest at another ; and that is the castle of our Pasha. If I like to go there, I believe I shall be welcome in a week or so ; and meanwhile, this is a charming place to wait at."

With this intelligence the Princess seemed quite content. With an almost motherly friendliness :

"Help me up from my chair," she said, "and come to our room to be beaten again at chess."

The game that evening proceeded almost in silence. No word or look came from Mrs. Schilizzi which showed that her thoughts had strayed beyond knights and pawns and bishops. The following day when he started on his usual stroll with her, she surprised him by saying with decision :

"I am not going to stop out long." And as soon as they had reached a walk which was comparatively unfrequented, she began, "I want to tell you something. You had much better go away. It is best for every reason."

Surprised and bewildered, he asked her what she meant. "Where must I go ? Why must I go ? When ?"

"Soon," she said. "Can't you see that my aunt is beginning to wonder about you ; and any morning I may hear from my husband that he is coming. Indeed, I shouldn't be surprised if he came without my hearing. I'm getting so uncomfortable I hardly know what to do."

It was not only what she said, but there was a peculiar quality in her manner that roused in Grenville a certain sense of injustice, and seemed to have placed at once a distance between him and her. "Certainly," he replied, "if you wish it, I will go. It is true I have nowhere to

go to—except, I suppose, England. I have no home, as you know, either there or anywhere.”

“England!” she exclaimed. “No—I didn’t mean that.”

“Well then, Paris, if you like it better. I can easily make arrangements to go by the evening train.”

“Don’t be silly,” she cried. “Do try to understand me. I only mean, go away for a day or two; and if you like to do so, come back when Paul arrives. It matters about my aunt so much more than about him; and if you are here when he is, it will look so much better to her.”

“Do you mean then that I must go at once? Tell me. I am at your orders.”

Her tone was almost tender; but as she went on it grew chilly again. “No—no; I don’t want you to go to-day. That would look worse than if you remained till Christmas. But talk to my aunt about going—make her think you are going. It will be quite enough, in any case, if you go to the Pasha for a day or two. Come,” she said presently, “I must be turning back again. For the last two mornings I have neglected my children; and I mean to teach them some lessons before luncheon.”

Grenville could not help being annoyed at the instructions given him. The matter of them he could bear, but what he could not bear was the manner. The former affected him like any ordinary pain, which he could accept with fortitude and acquiescence; but the latter seemed rather to produce some irritated rebellion of the nerves, whose action lay beyond the province of fortitude. “Of course,” he said to himself, “I will go, should she really wish it; or even if I see myself that it is well for her that

I should go. But she seems to think that if she wishes to send me away, I can be sent away like a footman, and rung for when I again am wanted."

In this language, however, he recognized the return of the temper which had attacked and tortured him, and with which he had struggled in London. He knew it now—that spirit of unjust accusation, malignant as the devil himself, and petty as the puniest of his imps; and he found that he had advanced considerably in the art of self-discipline. "Get thee behind me," he said again and again, to each bitter thought which whispered itself in his ear against her: and he charmed it away, like a saint quoting a text, by quoting from his memory some words of love or some look of kindness. He also—though on reflection he did not consider them necessary—faithfully followed her instructions with regard to his conduct toward the Princess. Without committing himself to a statement that he was going to leave, he gave her to understand, which he could now do truthfully, that he was staying where he was, in the expectation of shortly going to the Pasha; and, more than this, with regard to Mrs. Schilizzi, he kept over his manner and movements so strict a watch that, if the Princess should have really begun to criticise them, her suspicions should be disarmed by the steps she took to confirm them.

But though Grenville outwardly was perfectly calm and good-tempered, and to Mrs. Schilizzi, whenever he was alone with her, tender, his life for the next few days was one constant effort of self-control. Apart from the Princess or her children he daily saw less and less of her. She did not deny him the walks which had by this time become habitual; but she professed a distaste for the



lonelier parts of the gardens ; she kept as much as she could to the paths which were most frequented ; and she seemed by preference to take the children with her. She did not find fault or quarrel with him ; but she did what was more estranging. She avoided, so far as she could, all topics that were personal, and whenever he tried to approach them, she adroitly turned to others. He had sometimes thought her hard, he had sometimes thought her cruel. He was now fretted with an even worse suspicion of her—that, so far as he was concerned, she was gradually becoming frivolous. Inward troubles such as these, depending on such slight vicissitudes, seem to many people to be hardly troubles at all, and to need on a man's part no firmness in bearing them. Let such people consider how small and hidden an injury in the vital parts of the body may cause the most intolerable suffering ; and they then may conceive how a mind may be sometimes as sensitive as a stomach ; and how the finest minds, though they may show suffering least, are those that feel it most, and need most strength to bear it. Grenville's secret sufferings were of two kinds. First came the sense, made the more difficult to deal with because it was doubtful, that the woman who had been so near to him was now gradually withdrawing herself ; while a phantom was constantly facing him of his own approaching desolation. Secondly came a sense of his own unutterable folly, supposing this woman to be actually thus treating him. All his thoughts, which were in the service of his own self-love, began to plot together, and break out into insurrections, threatening her and clamoring to be revenged on her : but never once, by an angry look or word, did he allow a sign of this inward tumult

to escape him. On the contrary while one part of his mind was stinging him with distrust of her and resentment, he forced himself, by the aid of another part, to act as if he completely trusted her. However unreasonable or capricious her conduct and words might seem to him, he forced himself to interpret them in some way to her advantage ; nor did he relax his forbearance, though it hourly grew more difficult, as he looked in vain for any sign that she was touched by it, or was even aware of it. At last, indeed, he was growing to dread, rather than look forward to his meetings with her, when one morning, to his extreme surprise, she greeted him with a voice and look, like those of their early days—those days in the forest, which seemed now like some lost existence. "Bobby," she said softly, "I have a great deal to say to you. I am going this morning to take you for a walk in the country—you see I am ready. Have you got your hat? Then come."

Hardly able to believe in such a return of happiness, Grenville walked by her side, unconscious of the road they were taking, till she said, "We will go to a place where I took you once before." He then realized that they were on their way to the mill. "Listen," she went on presently; "this morning I have heard from Paul. He perhaps will be here to-morrow, or at farthest the day after ; and my aunt, who has been only staying here in order to keep me company, has settled already to return home this evening."

Grenville looked at her and received the news in silence. One curious thing struck him about her. Circumstances were approaching which, more than all others, might seem calculated to increase the nervousness she

had so often before exhibited ; now the nervousness, instead of increasing, seemed to have wholly vanished. She was serious indeed ; but as far as frankness goes, she was as fearlessly, as affectingly frank, as she had been on the lake or in the hunting lodge. "Darling," she exclaimed presently—it was long since she had used that word, "will you mind if I ask you one thing. Let us turn back now, and go for this walk later. My aunt will have left by that time ; and the whole afternoon will be our own. I don't want to be hurried. I have so much to say to you."

Grenville assented, and they returned almost in silence—a silence of union, not a silence of estrangement.

"I hope," said the Princess to Grenville, just before her departure, when Mrs. Schilizzi happened to have left the room, "I hope you'll write and tell me of your visit to this wonderful Pasha ; and if you have time on your hands, come back again to me. I," she continued, "am wanted here no longer, now that Irma will have her husband ; and I have business at home that has been asking for me for the last five days. As you are not going directly, you of course will make his acquaintance. He's not grand, like your friends the Count and Countess ; but I don't know anyone with a better head on his shoulders."

Grenville wondered if in this there were any oblique hint to himself. Of one thing he had become aware at all events, that the Princess saw no need of conveying any hints to her niece.

"Tell me," said Mrs. Schilizzi, when the Princess had driven off ; "should you mind, Bobby, if we took the children with us ? It would give them so much pleasure,

and I should like it myself for other reasons. I can't bear to think that you should come between me and them ; and, indeed, you don't ! But I was a little afraid of you thinking that they might come between you and me. They won't ; but I'll do as you wish about it."

"Take them," he said ; and she saw that he said it willingly.

They went again by the way they had gone that morning. They came to the place where the well-remembered path took them from the high road and led them by the willows and the river.

"Have you forgotten," she said to him, "the day that I first brought you here ? I keep in my mind every word that you said to me. My soul was being born that day, and all the world seemed beautiful."

"I," he answered, "have also forgotten nothing."

They walked on in silence. "Look," she exclaimed presently ; "did you see that water-ousel, how pretty it was ! It darted out from the shadow of those two bushes. These bushes, when last we were here, had very few leaves on them. You picked up a stone, when we went past them. I remember what you said. I wonder if you do ? You said that when two people were really fond of each other the heavens were open for them. I wonder, Bobby, if they will be open for me much longer ?"

Before he could answer she had begun calling to the children, as if to escape from feelings which she could no longer control. "Come," she said, "both of you, and show me those pretty flowers." The children came and trotted like dogs along by her, extracting a promise that they should all have tea at the mill. They had it in the same summer-house. Their elders laughed with them ; the greatest

crescents studding an azure ceiling, that the Pasha had risen and was hospitably pressing my hand, before I was aware of seeing anything clearly. He was charmed, he was ravished to receive me. He had feared I had quite forgotten him. Breakfast would be ready presently. Would I excuse him while he completed his toilet. He took me by the arm, and led me to another room—a room which I recognized, dim with purple velvet, and glimmering through its dimness with silver inkstands and blotting-books. He left me here alone with a copy of the *Vie Parisienne*, and presently reappeared, doing infinite credit to his tailor; illuminated by a rose in his button-hole, and breathing perfume like a god of Greek mythology.

“‘Let us descend,’ he said. ‘By the way, there is here a friend of yours. You must come and pass some days with me, and help me to entertain her. I have now here only ladies. There was a gentleman coming; but he has failed me.’

“Before I had time to ask him who my friend was, some folding-doors were thrown open by a servant, and I found myself in the vaulted hall, with its mountains of Florentine furniture. Among them in a moment I distinguished the figure of Lady Ashford; and was conscious at the same time of the rustle of other dresses besides hers. Lady Ashford greeted me with her usual charm of manner; and I thought—though this might be fancy—eyed me a little curiously, as if thinking of the prophecies she had made about me a couple of months ago. While we were talking there appeared from behind a piano—who? The two ladies who had been pointed out to me in the Prater—the Baroness—and Miss

**Juanita Markham.** The Baroness is a woman of disagreeable expression, youthful in dress, in years a faded fifty, and looking about her with the light of superannuated intrigue in her eyes. As for the girl, her dress was wonderful. It suggested a yachting costume ; and seemed to have three intentions—to emphasize the beauty of her neck, her waist, and her wrists. The neatness of her hair and her shoes were both things to wonder at. Let me say no more of her. To me she is less than nothing. I hardly spoke to her. On our way to breakfast we passed through all those rooms, with their jeweled arm or on the walls, and their hangings of tapestry, at which Irma and I had smiled. Seeing them thus again, I seemed to be walking in a dream. I sat by Lady Ashford. We naturally talked of what had happened to us since the night of our dinner party in Vienna. I cannot flatter myself that I was extremely candid ; and, oddly enough, no more was she. I felt certain that she was not, from her manner. She had been in Italy ; there was nothing odd about that ; but then, she had come back to Vienna instead of going to London ; and about this move of hers there was evidently some mystery. Later on, I obtained, as I think, a clew to it. The Pasha, after breakfast, insisted on taking us for a drive. We all sat together in the brake which had taken him from the station. I did not enjoy myself. I was constantly and unpleasantly aware that that girl's eyes were trying to catch mine. I exerted myself to talk, but my voice was far from my thoughts, like that of a plover crying far from its nest. The Pasha insisted that I should remain for dinner ; and in one way I was glad to do so, as I wished to be as late as I could in getting back to Lich-

tenbourg. After our drive he took me to his smoking room. He is certainly an agreeable man, and his manners are highly polished. Indeed they are like furniture on which the polish is hardly dry. As for origin, he is come of a distinguished family ; but still, though he is as much of a gentleman as an adventurer could well be, what one sees first in him is the adventurer rather than the gentleman. Well—having talked about everybody, and almost everything in Europe and in Egypt, he told me that he had been expecting a visit from the King of Moldavia, who, I then recollected, had a villa at Lichtenbourg. I saw in his eye an odd, ambiguous light, and I then began to suspect what I am quite sure is the truth. He had asked Miss Markham here in order that she might meet the King. The King, it appears, however, is not able to come ; and the Pasha is consequently finding his party a trifle flat. He also said, with a certain discontented dryness :

““ Lady Ashford is here looking after her niece, whose chest is delicate, and ought to avoid draughts.’

“Miss Markham is obviously the reason of her aunt’s return to Vienna, and also of her presence here. It is an odd story, full of painful suggestions ; and it made me glad when I was once quit of the gates, and breathing the clear night air on my drive back through the forest.

“It was eleven o’clock when I arrived. Fritz was full of alarm about me. And so, at last, this strange day is over. The morning of it seems to me as if it were years ago ; and as for *her*, when did I last see her ? When shall I see her next ? And how ? Will it be to-morrow ?”

To this closing question events answered yes ; and

they gave their answer early. About ten o'clock he hoped he might have a note from her ; and to kill the intervening time which, when he was dressed, confronted him, he walked down to the springs, and watched the morning water-drinkers. These were now numerous, a variegated and well-dressed crowd ; some clustering round the pavilions at which the several waters were dispensed, others moving slowly along the winding walks. Grenville looked on with an absent kind of amusement, his eyes caught at times by some dress or parasol that shone like a wandering flower. But how little to him, he reflected, did the whole world mean now ; when he suddenly saw with a start, among all these nameless figures, a dress which he thought he recognized. He was right ; Mrs. Schilizzi was there. She was some fifty yards away ; she was walking slowly. There were many people near her ; but so far as Grenville could judge, she was without any companion. He hurried across the grass ; he overtook her ; he spoke to her. Again, as he did so, some of his old doubts returned, as to how she would greet him. The fantastic fear had seized him that the last four-and-twenty hours might have worked some complete change in her ; that she would stare at him as if he were a stranger, and resent his approach as impertinence. And once again his fantastic fears were dissipated.

"I looked for you yesterday afternoon," she said. "I thought we might have seen you in the restaurant, or at the band in the evening."

He told her that he had purposely stayed away all the day.

"Well," she said, "I daresay you were right ; but I wanted you so. I was feeling so depressed and lonely.



Tell me," she went on quickly, "you're not going away again to-day, are you?"

"No," he answered, "of course not—not if I can be with you."

"You can be with me, I think," she said, "almost as you like. Paul has found some friends here—business friends from Vienna; and all yesterday afternoon he spent with them playing billiards in the café. He seems in quite a good humor, and was cross only twice—once about his breakfast, and once about his bedroom. But as for that, they've given him another now, not in the hotel itself, but in the *annexe*, over the café. He's delighted with that. He feels himself quite a bachelor. I told him you were here, and that I had met you at my aunt's. He had heard of your fame, and was rather proud of my knowing you. I told him, too, that it was through you that I had heard of the hotel in the forest. If he mentions it, you will know what to say, but you need not make a mystery of it. He's here somewhere, drinking with some of his billiard-playing friends. I must introduce you; and you must come and breakfast with us at the restaurant. Talk to him a little now; but you had better not walk back to the hotel with us. See, there he is. Come with me, and let us meet him."

A white hat, with an exaggerated curl in the brim, a brown face, a small black mustache, teeth shown by a smile, and gleaming, almond-shaped eyes, buff-colored clothes, the pattern on which was seen from a distance, lavender gloves, and a stick with a silver top—this made up the figure that was now moving toward them. Grenville thought, as Paul Schilizzi came nearer, that the good-humor his wife had claimed for him could have hardly

been very durable ; for the smile which, at a distance, had seemed to shine across it, was, on a closer view, far more like a grin of irritation ; and said in advance to his wife, almost as plainly as if he had shouted it, " Who the devil is this that you have ventured to pick up, and be talking to ? " But the moment Mrs. Schilizzi mentioned Grenville's name to him, his manner completely changed, and his face took precisely the expression which a moment ago Grenville had falsely attributed to it.

" Mrs. Schilizzi," he said, " tells me you have been of great assistance to her. You know the Princess, too—a charming old lady that is. Of course, Mr. Grenville, coming from Smyrna, as I do, your name is exceedingly well known to me. We hope you are going to bring us a new epoch of prosperity."

His accent was slightly foreign, and he spoke with an oily glibness which might have conveyed an impression of mere guileless cringing, if it had not been for a certain inquiring gleam that peered and watched continually in his restless eyes. Grenville hardly knew in what way to comport himself ; but instinct prompted him with the manner which reflection would have led him to cultivate. He was perfectly civil ; he accepted the stranger's acquaintance ; but neither in look nor tone was there any trace of a wish to let the acquaintance approach the domain of friendship. Mr. Schilizzi, however, it seemed, was entirely satisfied ; and when Grenville had acknowledged his first complimentary remarks, he at once went on to ask him about some racing stables which he heard were in the neighborhood. Grenville was unable to give him any information ; that subject, therefore, dropped. Mrs. Schilizzi meanwhile had walked on a little ahead of them ;

and her husband, who had caught sight of some gorgeously dressed lady, took the opportunity of slightly nudging Grenville, and saying with an air of furtive connoisseurship: "Did you see that? That was a well-made woman."

"Paul," said Mrs. Schilizzi, "we breakfast at twelve, don't we? As you won't put up with the children's dinner, we shall now be obliged to go always to the restaurant; so I have told Mr. Grenville that if he likes he can share our table with us."

"Delighted," said Mr. Schilizzi. "I always say that, at meals, a *little-à-little's* a mistake. Do you," he went on, as they were nearing the hotel, "do you play at billiards, Mr. Grenville? No? They've a new English table here—cushions perfect. Schwabe and I were playing till eleven o'clock last night. Are you going indoors, Irma? Well, I'll fetch you at twelve. I've a couple of friends," he now murmured to Grenville, "Schwabe and Silbersheim, with whom, at Vienna, I do a bit of racing sometimes. My wife won't know 'em; and so, between you and me," Mr. Schilizzi's voice became here easily confidential, "they haven't the opportunity of telling tales out of school. I've promised to meet them at half-past ten at the café. And there they are, by Jove! Are you willing to come and join us?"

Grenville declined on some plausible pretext. Mr. Schilizzi waved a lavender glove at him, and, grinning "Then, *au revoir!*" rapidly strode away, and soon had his hands on the shoulders of a couple of Semitic dandies.

"Certainly," Grenville reflected, as he wandered off alone, "in no sense, other than a theoretical one, have I

done this man so much as the shadow of a wrong. I have interrupted no union that ever existed, or whatever there was to interrupt has long since ceased. The only union that exists between him and her—and there is one—may desolate my own life ; but my life does nothing to disturb *it*. The case is quite the contrary. She, sustained by the consciousness of my friendship and constancy, will perform better all the duties, and the only duties, she owes him. She will bear with him. She will consult his welfare ; she will be for him everything she has been, except being again a mother ; and as for her love, poor child, if he ever thought he possessed it, it was merely because he cared for it so little that he never noticed its absence. Noticed its absence ! ” his thoughts repeated presently. “ Do I not know that he actually would have resented its presence ? No—to a man like that I have certainly done no wrong.”

These considerations were his companions, till he found himself solitary in the country, and realized that his steps, almost without his consciousness, had taken him to the riverside path, leading to the well-known mill. The whole scene was haunted for him with memories of certain moments—with images of the children playing among the flowers, and making a heaven on the green floor of the meadows, and the mounting movement both of his soul and of hers, toward an opening heaven of the spirit, of which childhood was an unconscious reflection. And other memories, too, mixed themselves soon with these, tearful and plaintive, like a drift of rain sweeping suddenly into the wind—memories of her entreaties that he would never despise or hate her. He remained for a long time motionless, leaning on a broken post, while his

thoughts of the present were shifted under the influence of the memories of the past. The sense of relief, brought to him by his study of Mr. Schilizzi's character, slowly gave way to a sense of new anxiety, which already indeed had touched him, but which he had not till now quite realized. What he now began to ask himself was, how should he treat this man? "We know little," he reflected, "when we enter on such a situation as mine, what problems it may in time reveal to us. It is like a plant whose thorns sleep in the sprouting stalk. It must root itself and grow in our lives till we really can know its nature."

Thoughts are sometimes far more rapid than any possible record of them, sometimes far slower. In this case they were far slower; and the stroke of a distant clock here warned Grenville that already it wanted only half an hour of twelve. He hurried back, mindful of his engagement for breakfast, half in eagerness to rejoin one of the party, half shrinking from the prospect of even apparent amity with the other. His way to the restaurant led him close to the café. The tall doors were open. In front of them were chairs and tables; and there, seated, with an empty liqueur-glass in front of him, and quietly winking an eye at a neat *demoiselle de comptoir*, with whom he was affecting to haggle over a few *kreutzers*, was Mr. Schilizzi, basking in happy idleness. He called to Grenville, and, nimbly jumping from his seat, swore pleasantly at the time, which was, he declared, past twelve, and he hurried into the hotel, with somewhat of the air of a terrier, saying, "I must worry my wife out. She was never punctual in her life." He presently reappeared, having accomplished his chivalrous purpose; and he, Grenville, and Mrs. Schilizzi were

soon seated before some olives and sardines in the restaurant. Mrs. Schilizzi asked Grenville where he had been during the morning. He described the course of his walk, and the spot where he had stood meditating. The tone of his voice was as careless as tone could be; but a momentary look in her eyes told him that his words meant much to her. Mr. Schilizzi, it appeared, had devoted the same period to billiards, and announced that in the afternoon he was going with his friends to the racing-stables. He had found out all about them, and proposed that his wife should accompany him. Watching the pair, Grenville was struck by two things--first, that this proposal on his part was a mere concession to civility, made without any wish or expectation that she would accept it; secondly, that she received it with an expression of weary aversion, and was on the point of returning it some contemptuous answer. The next moment he saw that she controlled the feelings uppermost in her, and forced an acquiescent smile. "As you know, Paul," she said, "I don't care much about horses; but still, if you wish it, I shall be very happy to come."

"You will be, will you," said her husband. "Then all I can say is, that a minute ago you certainly didn't look it."

Grenville stared at him with a quick, painful interest. His glib voice still had its oily quality, but it sounded harsh, as if some grit suddenly had got into it, and his eyes were fixed on his wife, with a look of detecting sharpness, as if he had caught some elusive fault in her, and was impishly delighted with the capture. "My dear," he went on, "will you let us begin smoking? Mr Grenville, try one of these cigarettes."

It was Grenville's impulse to refuse, but he had no excuse for doing so. Mr. Schilizzi meanwhile had turned away from his wife, as if it were not worth his while to speak to her further about the drive; contriving, so Grenville felt, to make the dropping of his proposal an affront to her even greater than the annoyance he would have caused by insisting on it. Grenville hardly dared to look at her, he felt the situation so painful. He did, however, catch her eyes for a moment, and he saw they were moist with many conflicting feelings.

"Paul," she said, rising, "I am going up to the children. As you don't seem to want me really, I will sit with them somewhere in the gardens; but if you do, I am quite ready to go."

"No," he replied, with a sneer which ensconced itself in the corners of a smile, "I think, my dear, I can get on without you. Mr. Grenville and I will finish our coffee here."

As she went out, Grenville opened the door for her. "Bobby," she murmured to him sadly, "come to us this afternoon in the gardens."

He and Mr. Schilizzi sat together for a little longer; and he was pleased to find that, without giving any offense, he was able to make impossible even the first beginnings of intimacy. He was, indeed, pleased to detect, or at least to fancy, a certain contempt for him in his companion's tone, who said as they separated, "I fancy, Mr. Grenville, that you care for racing almost as little as my wife does."

He was absent till nearly dinner time. For a couple of tranquil hours Grenville sat in the garden with Mrs. Schilizzi and her children. He and she hardly exchanged

a sentence which would, if written down, have hinted to anyone that they were lovers ; but a sympathy, saddened and deepened by the consciousness of many unexpressed circumstances, breathed in every tone and every look that passed between them ; and no event, attested by a hundred subpœnaed witnesses, could have indicated a union closer and more complete than this, which would have baffled the eyes of the most censorious.

Mr. Schilizzi, when they all met again at dinner, had wholly forgotten the temper he had betrayed at breakfast. He was full of prospects, associated mysteriously with horse-flesh, which had blossomed in the course of his afternoon experiences ; and his spirits showed themselves in the appreciation he expressed of his dinner, and in the quickness with which he praised and dispatched many glasses of champagne. "Perhaps," he said, as the banquet drew to an end, "you will take my wife, Mr. Grenville, to listen a little to the band. I have one or two matters to settle with a couple of friends, which could not interest either of you." And putting down a handful of money on the table, "Irma," he said, "you and Mr. Grenville must settle the bill together."

Sticking his hat well on one side of his head, and tucking his cane under his arm, he hurried away and left them. Under the same trees where before they had sat together, they sat together once more, silent under the shelter of the music ; and when they parted, they parted hardly knowing how the day had impressed them—whether by its strangeness, by its union, or by its estrangement.

Several days passed like this. Mr. Schilizzi, in his normal state, was smiling and talkative with a sort of fawn-



ing *bonhomie* ; but at intervals, for a moment, some invisible provocation from his wife turned his smile into a lurking, vindictive sneer, and, to Grenville's ears, sharpened his words like needles. But these occasions were rare. The billiard table and the gay ladies of the café, his sporting friends and their various sporting projects, occupied most of his time, and titillated him into complete satisfaction. As for his wife and Grenville, they daily spent hours together ; but they were rarely alone, and they were rarely in any spot where they felt sufficiently at ease for unreserved conversation. Once or twice in some secluded path, forgetting herself for an instant, she laid her hand on his arm, but as instantly she withdrew it, shrinking to a distance from him. He, too, once or twice, for an instant, had been betrayed into somelike familiarity ; and she had not only shrunk from this, but reproved him for it in an indignant whisper. She seemed to Grenville to be like a moon still shining for him ; but a moon that was gradually eclipsing itself behind hazy, gathering clouds.

Apart, however, from the constraint for which they themselves were responsible, more was due to the action of Mr. Schilizzi. As to what his wife did, he seemed wholly indifferent, except when some incalculable trifle evoked his resentful grin at her. At last, however, a curious change came over him. Sunday arrived, and though there were few English visitors, a stray English clergyman had organized a service in the reading room. To this Mr. Schilizzi, for some reason or other, thought it incumbent on him to go ; and having discovered that his wife had a new dress with her that pleased him, he insisted that she should array herself in this, and come

with him to astonish the congregation. In the afternoon, when, having discarded his tall hat and his prayer book, he descended from his bedroom, where he had been napping, to sun himself in front of the café, he saw his wife strolling across the *place* with Grenville. He had often, with perfect apathy, seen her do this before ; but now a curve of vindictiveness at once showed itself on his nostril, and hurrying up to her, he said in a tone that was like a bite, " My dear, the sun is a great deal too warm for you. If you can postpone till dinner your conversation with Mr. Grenville, I'll see myself that you have a walk, as soon as it gets cooler."

" It is hot," said Grenville, with ready tact. " Mrs. Schilizzi herself was saying so, just as you came up."

" It's not often," he replied, " that her judgment agrees with mine. Come, Irma, come back to your sitting room. Mr. Grenville, we shall meet at dinner."

At dinner the unpleasantness had completely passed away ; and Grenville was again left, afterward, to listen with Mrs. Schilizzi to the music.

" Paul," she said, " has been in a dreadful temper. He's been asking me what I mean by making myself so conspicuous with you ; and my arm—do you know, at first I resolved that I wouldn't tell you—is, above the elbow, black and blue from his pinching it."

" What," asked Grenville, after an expression of sympathy, " what is it that has put him out so suddenly ?"

" I think I can tell," she said. " This dress I have on to-day—it's a great deal too smart for the place—but it struck him how pretty I looked in it ; and he heard, in the hall or somewhere, a Russian Grand Duke admiring me. I know exactly what passed in his mind ; I have

noticed in him the same thing so often. I became at once, for the time, a valuable possession in his eyes, and he was determined to show me off as his own exclusive property. He doesn't want me himself ; and as long as nobody else does, he never would care if I lived and died alone ; but the moment he is reminded that other people may admire me, he likes to take me about in order that they may all stare at me, but is perfectly furious if I give even a smile to them. This afternoon," she went on, "he waited till the gardens were full, and then he walked me about wherever the crowd was the greatest, as if he were a peacock, and as if I were his tail. I was so nervous, for, whenever I turned my head, I felt his eyes were on me ; and he said, 'Who are you looking at ?' However, as you see, he is perfectly quiet now ; he was angry with me on your account for no reason personal to yourself ; and if you will not be out of reach to-morrow morning, before you hear from me, we may perhaps have a pleasanter day than those we have been passing lately. If this is so, I will tell you by ten o'clock."

She was as good as her word. A message arrived punctually, and the news and the proposal conveyed in it were far beyond Grenville's hopes. Mr. Schilizzi and his boon companions would be absent the whole day, at a town some thirty miles distant, attending a sale of horses. They had, in fact, started already ; and she proposed that Grenville should take her and the children to visit once again the hotel and the hunting-lodge in the forest. They went. They picnicked in the lodge. The children were wild with happiness, and were allowed, under Fritz's care, to disport themselves for an hour or so in the forest. Grenville and Mrs. Schilizzi were left alone.

"Irma," he said to her, shortly before the return of the others, "do you believe this of me now? Do you believe I can never go away from you?"

"I don't know," she answered, looking with a sad smile at him. "I'm afraid that very often you will be obliged to do so."

"Perhaps, if separation can be produced by intervals of miles and days; but I shall never be really parted from you until you desire to part from me."

"Nor I, Bobby, from you. I don't know if I am glad or sorry for it. Tell me this—is there nothing that you feel sorry for?"

"I wish," he said, "to be honest with you. I will, then, make you a confession. There is something within me which is always asking this—that I, alone and personally, for all the happiness you give me, may make, by some secret pain a constant atonement to something."

"Bobby," she said, "my own one—I am doing that already."

The children's voices in the passage prevented any answer, and the veil of common cheerfulness fell once more over both of them. During the drive home, gradually feeling weary, she for one moment leant her cheek on his shoulder; and, with one plaintive look at him, she removed it again so quickly that the act would by any observer have been attributed to the jolting of the carriage.

Mr. Schilizzi returned for dinner that evening. Grenville was struck by his humor, which was curiously sharp and taciturn, and set it down to some annoyance connected probably with horses. But this explanation seemed hardly to account for the fact that when dinner

was over he stuck to his wife's side for nearly an hour at the band, and only left her with Grenville just as the performance was ending, and did even this only so as to exchange a word with a friend.

"He," said Mrs. Schilizzi, the moment he was out of hearing, "he is furious again with me. I told him I had been for a drive with you. He stamped, and grinned, and swore at me. I thought for a moment he was going to knock me down."

"What has made him like this?" Grenville asked hurriedly. "Has he lost some money, or has anything else annoyed him?"

"No," she said, "it's jealousy. He's beginning to think I like you."

"Do you think it would really pain him to know you did?"

"Pain is the wrong word. It would, I believe, infuriate him. It is odd that it should be so, as he cares nothing for me. Nothing could annoy him more than my affection for him, unless it were my affection for somebody else."

## CHAPTER XXI.

**GRENVILLE** next morning received the following note :

"Paul and I are going to-day for an expedition—to the place where he went yesterday, and on the same business. The same thing may possibly happen to-morrow. Dine with us as usual. If my manner is odd, forgive me."

The first thing that struck him, on reading this, was the blankness of the prospect that thus opened up before him. One whole day, and very probably two, had had in an instant everything sponged out of them, except the burden of so many intolerable hours. He found this burden greater than even his fears had anticipated ; and the worst came to the worst ; there actually were two days of it. Even the meeting at dinner, which he longed for from early morning, desiring it like a water-brook in the desert, when it came was an aggravation of his pain. Mr. Schilizzi to him was glib and civil as ever ; but as for her, instead of being civilly distant, and softening her distance now and then with a smile—instead of behaving thus, which he was already prepared for—she treated him in a way which struck him as gratuitously repelling. She affected complete indifference to any topic he started ; and if ever she noticed his opinions, it was either to question or to contradict them. For the first night he bore this without even a mental murmur ; though, when after dinner, she refused to listen to the band, declaring

that music bored her, and that she was going to rest on her sofa, he felt in his heart the movement of a new rebellious bitterness. But the second, when all those experiences were repeated, when, on meeting him at dinner, her voice had no tone of welcome, and her eyes never forgot themselves in a single relenting look, though he struggled to think she was still doing violence to her wishes, his powers of belief became restive under the growing strain that was put upon them, and at last refused any longer to supply him with this difficult comfort. His own manner underwent a complete, though subtle change. He did not for a moment become discourteous or even brusque. On the contrary, his conversation became what a stranger would have thought more brilliant. But his remarks glittered and their points became keener because, by a silent process, they froze and crystallized into cynicism. Mr. Schilizzi, without knowing why, found himself thinking Grenville a really pleasant companion; and, as he finished his fifth glass of champagne, began to show his appreciation by several covert innuendoes, whose last clause was a wink. At last, as he looked round the restaurant, at the end of one of these sallies, Grenville noticed that his eyes suddenly fixed themselves. He noticed, also, what the object was which had arrested them. It was the lady, the charm of whose figure Mr. Schilizzi had noticed in the garden. As to her character, there could be no doubt about it, though it was one which, with charitable irony, the world would describe as doubtful; and Grenville felt as certain as if all the story had been confessed to him, that Mr. Schilizzi already had contrived to make some acquaintance with her. Presently she swept by, fanning herself, and diffusing

zephyrs of patchouli ; and as she went Mr. Schilizzi's traveling eye followed her movements, between eyelids almost closed. Then, for five minutes, he seemed unnaturally interested in his dessert. He peeled a pear for his wife, and talked to her with consistent attention. Then he looked at his watch, and exclaimed, with a most creditable start :

"By gad, Irma, I wonder if you know what time it is ? I must hurry off instantly to meet Schwabe and Silbersheim. What will you do ?" He frowned, and looked doubtful for a moment. "Hang it all !" he said, "you'd better wait at the band for me ; and Mr. Grenville will see that nobody comes and eats you."

Grenville and Mrs. Schilizzi once again were alone together ; but a few conventional words about the music and the warmth of the evening were all that for some minutes they found themselves able to utter ; and their tone in doing so was one of polite indifference. She was the first to inaugurate any change ; and the change, when she did so, was from indifference to actual hardness.

"The music," she said, "interests you as little as it does me. If you meet my husband, will you tell him I have gone in ?"

As she spoke she half rose to go ; but with an exclamation violent, although under his breath, Grenville stopped her.

"If you go," he said, "I conclude you will go forever. I myself shall leave Lichtenbourg to-morrow."

She looked at him, not with tenderness, but still with a start of quick, involuntary alarm.

"What," he went on, more gently, "what is the use of my remaining here, if all day long I am never to have a



sight of you ; and when we do meet, you resent every word I utter ? ”

“ Have you no sense of my position ? ” she said. “ Are you utterly unable to feel for me ? Well—to-morrow, I am going on to more expeditions. You may, if you like, meet me in the gardens at eleven. Bobby, you must come. You don't know how all this is killing me. I must go in now ; I'm so tired. Good-by till to-morrow ; and then, if you can, tell me you don't quite hate me.”

Her strange changes of feeling struck him differently at different times. Sometimes they seemed the result of some deep but troubled principle, trying pathetically to adjust itself to the stress of untried circumstances ; though it was a principle to which, as yet, he had found no complete clew. Sometimes they seemed the caprices of mere emotional selfishness. But to-night he retired to rest convinced of at least one thing, that, whatever it cost her, she was still true to him. When he came to meet her in the garden, she was there before her time ; but he was conscious of a momentary annoyance at seeing that she had brought her children. As soon, however, as he sat down by her, she told them to go and play ; and then, mindful of her last words at parting, he murmured to her timidly some phrase of affection.

Her answer was a new surprise to him. He could hardly believe his ears. Averting her head, with a concentrated repulse in her accent :

“ Don't,” she exclaimed, “ don't say a word of that kind. Don't touch me or come near me, or say anything to suggest that you are fond of me.”

In faltering, incoherent sentences he asked her what was her meaning.

"Last night I was ill," she said. "I hardly could sleep at all ; and [I lay awake hating myself more and more, till the morning. If I go on seeing you much, I believe I shall have brain fever. Why don't you go away? It's unkind of you, staying on here. I wish you'd go, and then perhaps I shall be at peace again."

"Go?" exclaimed Grenville. "Do you really wish me to go?"

He stared at her. She said, "Yes."

"Then I will," he answered, quietly. "I will go this afternoon."

He could hardly believe, even now, that she would take him at his word ; but in a slow, low voice she said :

"I think it would be better. Of course, if it is inconvenient to you, you could put it off till to-morrow. Paul is unwell this morning. He's in bed with a chill or something ; so, as far as he is concerned, your presence would make no matter." Then, after a moment or two, with a little quiver on her lips, "I don't want you to go," she said ; "I suppose I don't know quite what I do want. And yet, yes—I do know. Go—and go to-day."

"And for how long?" he asked. "Do you mean forever?"

"Oh," she said irritably, "don't trouble me with questions. No—not forever. Surely you can go to the Pasha's, and when I want you again, I can write and tell you. When you come back, we may be able to make things different."

"Very well, Irma. And will you be happy without me?"

"I shall have you again by and by," she said more calmly. "And we may be able to put things then on a

different plane. You know what I mean. I need not speak more clearly."

"You speak of that, Irma, as if it were very easy. I didn't know that human nature was so simple."

"Perhaps," she said, "women and men are different. I think it would be easy for a woman."

Grenville tried to answer her, but he found it impossible to do so. He rose abruptly, and held his hand out to her. She merely looked gravely at him.

"Low as my plane is," he said at last, "will not you stoop to it even to say good-by. I am going to make my preparations. I shall not be here to-night."

"Where are you going?" she asked.

"To the Pasha's, if I find he will have me. I shall send Fritz with a note. If he won't have me, I will go back to the Princess. I will keep out of your way till I have gone; and I shall not return or trouble you with letters till you write to me."

He raised his hat, turned on his heel, and went. He sent his note; and, while waiting for his servant's return, he hardly knew in his distraction what to do with himself. He resolved on a long walk. But what walk should he take? Every road he knew was haunted with memories of Irma; and "sorrow's crown of sorrow" was hanging on every tree. He did at last, however, hit on an unknown route—a track that led him away into some ragged tracts of wood; and, sitting on a prostrate trunk, he brooded in restless bitterness. What the heart of his pain was he at first did not know. It was something below the surface that was churning the waters of misery. At last he realized what it was—it was this thought: She had said it would be easy for her to alter the character of

their relation. That she should wish to alter it was not the thing that pained him ; nor even the thought that she would find it easy to do so ; but the new light which, if it were so easy to alter it, was thrown on her character in having ever yielded to it. Her self-surrender to him had been hitherto in his eyes transfigured and sublimated by what he believed to be its intensity and completeness. It represented to him a need of her nature—a movement of her inmost soul. But now—even supposing it to be a sin—the ease with which she said she could amend it, instead of making him think better of her future, made him think incalculably worse of her past. If she could go back so lightly to the paths of technical virtue, how much more lightly, how contemptibly, must she have acted in leaving them. Terms came into his mind, offering themselves as applicable to her conduct, the very thought of which he winced at, and which his will would not suffer to be applied.

Heavy at heart, and moving like a man wounded, he dragged himself slowly, after an hour or two, back to Lichtenbourg. Even in his wretchedness one thing delighted him. He saw Fritz at the hotel door, with a carriage and with luggage in readiness. He knew, therefore, even before an effusive note was handed to him, that the Pasha would be delighted to welcome him : and without a moment's delay he took his seat and departed. He was a prey during the journey to two alternate impulses—the one, an impulse to complete his accusation and conviction of her, and so far as possible to shake himself free of her memory : the other an impulse to justify her, and explain her conduct, by attributing it to something too high for his comprehension. He struggled

to imagine himself living happy without her. He said to himself that the world had other women as charming ; and in especial he bethought him of the eyes and figure of Miss Markham. But he had hardly consented to harbor this last image, when he drove it away in disgust and repentant sorrow ; and, mentally abasing himself at the feet of Mrs. Schilizzi, confessed and asked pardon for this act of despairing treachery. This mood was hardly less painful than the other ; but it was a mood which braced him with a sense of self-respect.

"Whatever, Irma," he murmured, "may be thought of my devotion for you, I will shame the most saintly lover that ever lived, by its fidelity."

Gradually his thoughts began to shape themselves into something like verse, which gave him some satisfaction by its sympathetic cadence ; and at last, producing a notebook, he scribbled down these lines :

You may, if you will, till I die, leave me friendless ;  
But I still shall go dreaming aloof and alone,  
That at last, in the life or the sleep that is endless,  
I shall breathe on your bosom, forever your own.

No verse, however, not a whole book of them, could have eased his breast of the physical pain oppressing it ; or have made him, by the time he reached the Pasha's castle, able to meet the world with anything but distaste and weariness. The party had neither increased nor diminished since he was there last. So far as he had considered the matter, he had secretly hoped it might have increased : for new faces would at any rate be a sort of distraction ; and the more people there were present, the fewer he would have to talk to. But the

Pasha, with Lady Ashford, the Baroness, and Miss Markham, was just such a party as would compel him to exert himself, or make him, if he failed to do so, seem either rude or peculiar. Lady Ashford, by whom he sat at dinner, did, indeed, after asking him many questions about his prospects, and lightly remarking, "I suppose you have not yet found your affinity?" say "Do you know, in some way, there's a distinct alteration in you."

In the evening they all of them played at billiards. The jeweled weapons on the walls glittered like fireworks. Grenville was just conscious that Miss Markham seemed now and then bent on showing him not only the beauty of her play, but that of her arms and wrists. He knew that people spoke to him. He knew that he answered when he was spoken to, and that he tried to make conversation. But of what he said he was only half-conscious; his own voice made no sound in his ears; and the voices of the others were merely like faint noises in a dream. The Pasha, when the ladies retired, suggested that he should come to the smoking room; but on plea of fatigue he excused himself, longing to be again alone—alone, so as to drop the smothering mask of gayety, to groan, if he pleased, instead of forcing laughter; and, if he could, to lose himself in the peace of sleep, hoping that to-morrow might bring him some note from Lichtenbourg.

He little knew how strong this hope had been in him till the post arrived and killed it. "How can a woman be so cruel!" he exclaimed to himself; and, smarting under this thought, his nature swerved in revolt from her, struggling to recover its independence. This was in

the morning, an hour before the midday breakfast ; and, during this hour, as he sat alone in his room, he found that his mind, with a kind of defiant longing, was looking forward to again meeting Miss Markham. Even to think of Mrs. Schilizzi had suddenly become so painful that his thoughts seemed to have been burnt by her, as if they had touched hot iron ; and, as a man whose clothes are on fire might plunge instinctively into water, he felt himself instinctively impelled to soothe himself by some distraction. Such being the case, Miss Markham's various fascinations, which he was till now hardly aware that he had noticed, or which, if they had occurred to him, he had pushed contemptuously out of his consciousness, suddenly now came back to him, and he let his imagination dwell on them. How would she be dressed ?—for her dresses were always changing. How would she look at him through her long, dark lashes ? How would her lips, like a parted rosebud, speak to him ? He felt himself impatient to see her again ; and he found himself entering the hall, the usual place of meeting, a good ten minutes too early. The masses of furniture bewildered his eyes at first ; and seeing what the time was, he concluded the room was empty ; but a colored something moved against a background of screens and cabinets, and he realized that this was actually Miss Markham herself. She had apparently been out of doors, for a dainty little hat was on her forehead, a jacket clipped her figure, insolent in its finished simplicity, and a delicate gloved hand indolently held a walking-stick. When Grenville caught sight of her she was sitting in a great Florentine chair, holding with her other hand a pocket-handkerchief to her nostrils. She did not stir when he

entered, but, with the magnetism of a quiet ' Good-morning," she drew him toward her and then gave him her hand. " Tell me," she said, for a moment detaining him, " do you like this scent ?" She gave him the handkerchief.

" It's odd," he said. " What is it ?"

" I never heard the name before.. It is supposed to be very precious. Our host, the Pasha, gave it me. He," she added, with a mischievous twinkle in her eyes, " can well spare it."

" I don't know," said Grenville, after a pause, " if I like it."

" I," said Miss Markham, with the twinkle repeating itself in her eyes, and employing a word which is hardly elegant in itself, but which came from her lips as if modeled in Dresden china, " I think it's *beastly*. We're going to drive afterward," she continued, " so I shall not take off my hat. My gloves have twelve buttons, so I may as well begin undoing them. I've been out. I delight in walking."

At this moment Lady Ashford and the Baroness entered; and Grenville was struck by the oddly different way in which, as it seemed to him, these two ladies greeted him. Seeing him as they did, standing close to Miss Markham, Lady Ashford, he thought, showed symptoms of marked pleasure; while every wrinkle latent in the face of the Baroness appeared to twitch with equally marked annoyance. The Pasha, however, entered, rubbing his jeweled hands, and every expression at once naturally changed itself. As if by magic, a series of folding doors were flung open and the party went in to breakfast; but not even the breakfast, beginning with



the choicest caviare and ending with bonbons fresh from the artist's hand, could medicine the face of the Baroness to its usual sinister complacency. Struggling as he was for spirits, and half interested as he was in Miss Markham, Grenville still was conscious of a burning smart within him ; and would still have been absent-minded if his curiosity had not been roused by the bearing of those two elder ladies. In the course of the afternoon, it was more or less satisfied. -The object of their drive was the identical old castle which he had first heard of at the Princess's, and visited on his first morning at Lichtenbourg. Here, for a certain time, he found himself alone with Lady Ashford ; and he felt convinced from what she said, though she did not speak very plainly, that the Baroness, who was entirely under the influence of the King of Moldavia, was anxious to promote the intimacy between him and Miss Markham ; that Lady Ashford hoped that the King's caprice was evaporating ; but that she was staying with the Pasha, and probably outstaying her welcome, in order to offer her niece what protection she could.

"Can't you," asked Grenville, "take her back to England? Has she no mother or father to take care of her or keep her in order?"

"No," said Lady Ashford, "that's the worst of it. She's of age—she's just of age ; and is, unfortunately, her own mistress. She has money, too, and a most determined will of her own. If her family put her back up by any injudicious handling, she is capable of doing anything, and of snapping her fingers at the consequences. And yet," Lady Ashford continued, changing her tone, "she has the makings in her of really a fine character."

Grenville did not believe this ; he, however, forbore to say so. "Do you remember," said Lady Ashford, "how much you admired her at the Embassy? And she, too, was curiously taken with you. Have you forgotten our conversation that night, and some bits of philosophy I told you?" Grenville replied that he had not forgotten a word. "You may remember, then," she went on, "my telling you that the woman who can love most deeply, will never love her deepest till first she has loved in vain—that she only learns what she wants to give and get by finding out how much one man can neither understand nor give! Well—I believe since I said that to you, Juanita Markham has been finding out the truth of it." She added more in something the same strain, till a sort of suspicion, at last, dawned upon his mind of its being Lady Ashford's hope that he might, in Miss Markham's affections, be willing to seize on the throne which the monarch was preparing to abdicate. To entertain such an idea, in any serious sense, never for an instant occurred to him ; but the belief that Lady Ashford entertained it, to a certain degree flattered him, and gave a fresh impulse to the unhappy recklessness of his mood. A sort of spurious good spirits came to him as they drove back, and he felt fully equal to enjoying his host's society and puffing a private cigarette with him before dinner-time in the smoking room. In doing this, he was doing a work of most real charity. The Pasha's experiences and opinions were so wide and so comprehensive that there were only a few of them which, with all his happy audacity, he was able, except in confidence, to communicate frankly to ladies. He, therefore, constantly desired a man to whom his exuberant nature might unbosom itself. He

made no effort at anything indecorous. No effort was needed. His conversation flowed easily, like a sunny and babbling stream. He was never bitter; he was constantly humorous; and though there was nothing which he seemed to shrink from touching on, his language was never coarse, because nothing seemed coarse to him. The generalization at which he at last arrived was that no serious attachment could ever be Platonic at its beginning. "You can," he said, "if you like it, have Platonic affection afterward. Consider you, now, our good friend the Baroness. We may speak of her history, for all the world is acquainted with it. With the King of Moldavia she is absolutely Platonic now, and—what is your word in English?—unselfishly devoted to his interests; but then, of course, she was *au mieux* with him to begin with. You see!" said the Pasha, extending his forefinger, and screwing his eye up in triumph, like a statesman revealing some astute consideration of policy. To Grenville these chance words were a revelation, though hardly a surprise. The story which, according to the Pasha, all the world was acquainted with, he never had heard before; but his surprise became a certainty that the Baroness was the king's accomplice.

In any other mood the whole situation would have revolted him. He would have been revolted by the sense of being himself connected with it. But just as physical pain of one kind may make a man insensible to others, so the mental pain, which still burned under the surface, made Grenville insensible to what otherwise would have caused in him a moral nausea. His aim was not to think. His aim was to escape from thought; and again he turned at dinner for distraction to Miss Markham. He

began to be conscious of a new sort of attraction in her. That she was good, or refined, or elevated, he never for a moment thought. He could not even pity her as the object of the machinations of the Baroness ; but all the same she interested him as being in some ways a riddle. Her manner was refined, though he never believed she was. There was a dainty quiet in it. Her sense of humor was keen, but completely under control ; and when it lit up her face it struck him all the more from her eyes being in general soft with melancholy. "What," Grenville asked himself, "does she think of her King? Does she feel his desertion? Is she capable of feeling anything? And yet, whatever she is, that girl is in one way genuine. She has the courage of her own desires ; and the world will never interfere with her. She looks," he thought presently, as he let his eye rest on her, "pre-occupied as to how she can best go to the devil."

After dinner she affected him still more powerfully. She sang. Her voice astonished him. Its liquid tones seemed to vibrate with a passion committed to a music which was but another form of itself. Some music suggests a rising in the air. Hers suggested to Grenville fathomless sinking in the sea. "Let me live my life out!" He instinctively put these words to it as a kind of mental libretto. "Let me live my life out, no matter how soon, but completely ; and then, let the mountains fall on me, let the rocks cover me!" He shuddered as he listened : he felt that the effect on him was horrible ; yet he moved to the piano, and stood by the singer, fascinated. When she had finished he begged her to sing again ; but looking up to him with a faint, provoking smile, "No," she said, "I am tired. These windows open on a kind of plat-

form or balcony : I am going out to get my breath in the moonlight." He opened the window for her, and they went out together. He felt, as he did so, as if his good angel was deserting him. Before many minutes had passed, the girl, quietly mistress of the situation, had taken his hand. He had yielded to the magic of her touch ; and yet, deep in his heart, he felt there had been plunged a dagger. But his heart appeared to him hopelessly far away, disappearing out of sight in some hapless depth of his being. At this moment, however, whatever had become of his good angel, a bad one appeared, who performed a good one's function. This was the Baroness, who said they were wanted to play billiards. Grenville, at all events, had no need to be told twice ; and, by and by, when he found himself alone in his room, his mind was racked by one and one only hope—that the following day a letter might come to him from Lichtenbourg. But again there was disappointment ; and this time a worse reaction. Blankly staring from his window at the gardens and woods below, he saw, in a winding walk, a glimpse of Miss Markham's parasol. He descended and met her. Her eyes brightened when she saw him ; and the light in them softly trembled under her shadowy lashes. In the afternoon they rode together, though the Baroness opposed the arrangement, severely condemning its impropriety. But the Pasha informed her that such things were done in England. Lady Ashford confirmed the statement ; so there was no more to be said. In the evening again there was music ; and though there was no retirement on the balcony, Miss Markham had the art of producing moments of privacy in a well-lit room where several other people were present. Gradually he felt

that her presence was acting on him like some narcotic, lulling the pains and doubts that were aching within him secretly. He slept better the next two nights; and though, on the arrival of the post, he was wounded afresh each morning by finding that he had no letter, he felt that the personality of the woman near him was softly shielding his eyes from the vision of the woman absent. And yet to the woman near him, he yielded himself grudgingly and slowly. He was never conscious of uttering one genuine thought to her. The thoughts which he did utter were mere guests in his mind, and most of them were not honored guests. Still she had triumphed so far as to keep him constantly at her side; and his thoughts, it may perhaps be conjectured, were the last things she cared about. They were for her no part of the intimacy: they were little more than its coverlet. The second of these two mornings, she contrived a new stroke of generalship. Among other accomplishments she possessed that of drawing; and, instead of alluring him to meet her before breakfast in the gardens, she told him of a sitting room, with a view, in one of the towers, and there, she informed him, she was going to attempt a sketch. He acted on the hint conveyed to him. He helped her with her paints and pencils; but, despite his assistance, an hour had passed away, and a few outlines were all that the paper had to show for it. So far as Grenville was concerned, many men would consider that he had done little for which he could reasonably reproach himself; but this had happened at all events—without any air of forwardness, but quietly, with an insidious grace, the girl at last contrived to offer her lips to him, in a way that made him unable, if not unwilling, to refuse

them. She suggested that after breakfast they should again seek this retirement, which she adroitly let him know they could do without being observed. He met her at the foot of a certain winding stair, which took them to the landing out of which the room opened. It happened in the dusk, however, that she went to the wrong door, and Grenville found himself entering the very room—the bare room with the old rude furniture—where he and Mrs. Schilizzi had lunched together. He started, and stood absolutely still. Miss Markham had withdrawn instantly ; and saying, “Our room is the next one,” at once went to it, expecting that he would follow. But for a minute or so he could not move. That bare room appeared to him like the tomb of all the hopes of his life, of everything that was sacred and beautiful in it. He did not dare to so much as pass the threshold ; but the voice of Irma spoke in the dusty air, and he saw her eyes full of dreams and aspirations. He closed the door reverently ; he pressed his hand to his forehead. When he rejoined Miss Markham, she saw him a changed man. He little knew how the change would betray itself in his face. It could have escaped the attention of no one ; but the cause of it was naturally unsuspected by her.

“Are you ill ?” she said. “Are you suffering ?”

He caught at the suggestion eagerly. “It’s nothing,” he said. “It’s merely a sudden headache. I can hardly see. I must go to my room and be quiet. I shall be all right in an hour or two.”

Miss Markham’s face, like his, exhibited genuine feeling ; but hers suggested annoyance far more than sorrow. When he closed the door, she sullenly collected her

materials. She sat with them lying in her lap, her dainty lips pouting ; and, presently, undoing a button, she drew from her breast a locket. There was a man's portrait on one side, and on the other a crown in diamonds. She looked long at it with a half discontented smile.



## CHAPTER XXII.

GRENVILLE meanwhile had secured for himself at least one luxury—solitude. The emotions of men and women show themselves in different ways. A woman, suffering as he did, would have cried, or have broken down somehow. Grenville, at first, did nothing but sink into a chair by his writing-table—bite his lips, and listen to a sigh which he could not suppress, and which only quivered under his vain attempt to do so. But this pain called for some fuller relief than this. Lying on his writing-table was his diary. He had written nothing in it for days. He now opened it, hastily seized a pen, and soon the paper was sounding under its rapid, vindictive strokes.

“I don’t know,” he began, “if Hell is a real place; but if it is, I know the nature of its torments; for, during the last three days, I have suffered them. They have nothing to do with hot tongs or the fireplace. The fire and the burning iron are supplied by one’s own soul. They consist of the sense of sin together with the constant commission of it—and sin is the act of being separated from one’s own true self; and also from that to which one’s true self is devoted. If we were separated from this once for all, if one’s belief in its value once for all died, then one might be at peace; but in Hell this belief *is always* coming to life again, only that one may feel the

torture of again making one's self unfit for it. It is a never-dying, ever-reviving death. This sounds like a fragment from some book of theology. It is really a literal confession of an ordinary man of the world, whose thoughts are busy immediately not with God, but a woman—and a woman whom, according to theologians, he has no business to love. But with an extraordinary fidelity this secular experience of mine embodies what theologians say. To me this woman represents everything that is good—everything that is high and beautiful; and knowingly and deliberately I have estranged myself from her, committing against her daily acts of treachery. And my will has consented. But here is the strange thing—it has, as it were, consented against my will; and whenever this has happened—what monkish specialist will lend me an image savage enough?—a red-hot knife has gone through the tissues of my soul, cutting away from me all that in myself I respected, and leaving my life dead. Now, for the first time in its fullness, I know what guilt means. I remember a certain morning when I thought for a time I knew it. I thought I was convicted by my own conscience and abased before it. I know better now. What menaced me on that occasion, as if it were a sense of guilt, was really terror or distrust of an untried situation. For, so far as this woman was concerned, I was absolutely true, absolutely single-hearted; and, for the first time in my life, I was beginning to realize what absolute devotion to another human being meant. Theologians and moralists may say of me what they like; but I swear by all that they think sacred, that a new inward light was that morning dawning on me. But now, if that light is darkness, how great the darkness is!

"Irma," he continued, "I know that you have been strange and hard to me. You have tried me. But what of that? What must I be worth, if I could not bear such trials? How often have I said to you that I longed to suffer for you; and here at the first acute suffering I fall away! And yet—— Why have you left me without a single word? Are you going to take your own way to heaven, without so much as saying one good-by to me?"

Here his pen arrested itself. Seizing a piece of blotting-paper, he placed it on the page, and abruptly shut up the book; and having reflected for a few moments, he set himself to write a letter. It had no formal beginning. It ran thus:

"I want your opinion on a matter which is of great importance to me; and I hope you will be good enough to read what I say patiently, and not be angry with me for venturing thus to trouble you. What would a woman say if a man wrote like this to her?—would there be anything in it to touch or appeal to her, and soften her heart toward him, if, having cared for him, she had driven him away from her? Read this, and tell me. If—the man says—you feel that your relationship with me sets you at variance with yourself, or sullies you, or destroys your peace, I will not ask you to let me again come near you. But I will ask you one thing, both for your sake and mine. In cutting yourself off from the past that we have shared together, even while you condemn it, be just to it. As for your own heart, you can speak better than I can. What I want to do is to tell you about mine—to tell you some things which perhaps you hardly realize, and which will not only (so I venture to hope) make you *think* more kindly of me, but will also prevent your

thinking too hardly of yourself. I want to lay bare to you all that I have become, and been, and am, so far as my life has relation to your own ; and if in this you see anything that is good and true, I ask you not only to relent a little toward myself, but to remember that this truth and goodness is due to your influence, and is a reflection of your own nature. Well—as to truth; is not a man's truth to a woman shown by what he sacrifices in order to live true to her? Well—for your sake, I have renounced everything. As to worldly advantages, I have retained only enough of them to keep me in such circumstances as admit of my being your companion. Forgive me for alluding to this. You know it. But I doubt if you do know how completely, in other matters, I have made a parallel sacrifice. I have made myself, for your sake, without any friend but you. I don't say that I did this voluntarily : but it has been the natural result of the affection with which you have filled me. Everyone else has seemed to me strange and distant. No—not everyone. There have been a few old friends, to whom I still could naturally have talked with confidence ; but since I have known you I have never done so. I have been filled with a sense that any intimate thought of mine should be revealed to you only, and shared with you only. I have made myself for your sake, except for you, altogether alone. While you remained with me, you more than made up to me for everything ; but now that you have left me, I know how complete my loneliness is. Believe me, I am not exaggerating. Over every throb of my pulse, over every thought, over every look, I have kept watch, so that everything which is worthy in me might belong entirely to you ; and all that was unworthy

shriveled away and disappeared. For your sake all my sense of aspiration revived ; my intellectual interests became keen again. Why do I talk ? You know it. Ask your memory. Tell me this—am I so degraded and vile that I am not fit to be near you ? Perhaps if you knew all, you would not say that I am so. For shall I tell you what I have done ? As you drove me away, I have tried to be unfaithful to you. It was the only way I could think of to make my exile tolerable. I have tried to obliterate your image by that of another woman. I have laid myself open to all the charms that beauty—that mere beauty—could possess, and with the set purpose of being charmed by them. What will you now say to me—me who boasted of my faith to you ? And yet—and yet—I have this left to tell you : This woman could not charm me. My effort was all in vain. The pleasure I felt in her company was torture more than pleasure. Your image could not be obliterated. It is part of me. I cannot get rid of it. I am yours, and yours always. Why did you drive me away from you ? If you do not scorn me for this degrading test to which I have put myself, you will see how it at least proves the strength of my love for you. But perhaps the very strength of this love will make you scorn me yet further. If it does, do me at least one kindness. Let me see you once again, and veil your contempt in pity. Think of our past. Does all our past mean nothing ? Even now I cannot bring myself to believe this, when I remember the words your lips have whispered in my ears, your eyes with all your soul in them as they married themselves to mine, and all the transfiguration of your face :

"Ah, dear, but come thou back to me ;  
Whatever change the days have wrought,  
I find not yet one lonely thought  
That cries against my wish for thee."

This letter was sealed up in an envelope, on which he put no address, but mere the word "Private"; and this, having written the following few lines to accompany it, he inclosed in another, directed in all due form :

"Dear Mrs. Schilizzi, pray forgive me for troubling you ; but you will find, I think, that the inclosed belongs to you. It is evidently strictly private ; so I inclose it, in a sealed envelope, in order that if, by accident, it fell into other hands, there should be no chance of its being read inadvertently. Pray look at it, and let me know by the bearer if you recognize it as belonging to yourself. Sincerely yours, R. Grenville."

Summoning his servant, he asked him to procure a horse, ride to Lichtenbourg, and deliver the packet personally. "It contains," he said, "important papers, and must be put into the lady's own hands. You must learn from her maid when she is disengaged, as it wants an immediate answer ; and unless you can find her alone, and able to attend to the matter, don't leave the papers at all ; but bring them back to me. Fritz !" he said, calling him back, "should she happen to be out for the day, you had better remain the night, and come back to-morrow morning."

The rest of the afternoon passed anxiously. At five o'clock he presented himself in the drawing room, silencing the inquiries of the others by declaring himself much better, but securing an indulgence for a certain abstrac-

tion and listlessness by letting the impression prevail that he still was suffering. And, indeed, as the hours wore on, he began to suffer in reality. All through dinner, whenever the door opened, he turned round nervously in expectation of a letter for himself, and the tension of his nerves increased at every fresh disappointment. Afterward they went to the billiard-table, and asked him if he were well enough to play. He began to fear that they might suspect his malady to be mental, and even—fear is so unreasonable—that they might actually suspect the cause of it. He accordingly made an effort, and laughingly took a cue. He surprised himself, also, by playing extremely well—only the smallest noise outside distracted him so completely that several of his best strokes he made with the wrong ball. At last the folding-doors were opened with a crash. Grenville dropped his cue. A servant with a tray came straight and quickly toward him, and on the tray was a letter. He felt that the others were observing him. Truthful as he usually was, he hid his confusion by saying, "It is a letter from the doctor in Lichtenbourg. It will keep. I sent my servant to him to get some directions about some medicine." He resumed his play, and though his spirits had really risen, he did his best to repress all signs of recovery.

The moment he was alone he tore the envelope open. It contained but these few lines: "You don't know what I have suffered since you left me. Are you coming back? Does your letter mean that? Will it be—could it be—to-morrow? As to your inclosure, my opinion of it is this—that a woman would have a heart of stone who was not touched by it."

Fritz, next morning, again had his work cut out for him.

He was sent at eight o'clock to a town about three miles distant for a carriage, in which he was to return. He sent a note to his host, who was not an early riser, saying—and here most casuists would have acquitted him of untruth—that, although in his state of health there was nothing at all alarming, the note received last night made him wish to return to Lichtenbourg. This note, which was garnished with every necessary civility, he did not send till he learned that the carriage had arrived; and having waited to receive an effusive message from the Pasha, he drove away from the castle as fast as the horses could take him, without the embarrassment of an adieu either to Miss Markham or to anybody.

At first his spirits were cheered beyond his own control. The air blew freedom in his face, and his only discontent was that he could not outstrip the carriage. But then, for some cause which he could not himself explain, his state of mind changed like a day rapidly overclouding. "Why should this be?" he asked himself almost angrily. "What is it that thus changes our moods so incalculably? Are we masters of ourselves? Or are we anything more than an effervescence of succeeding thoughts, of which we are mere spectators?" An unbidden change, at all events, did take place; and, instead of looking forward to the meeting so close before him, he began to look critically at himself, and examine himself from a new standpoint. He was conscious of the keenness of the pains he had lately gone through; now there was a sudden lull in them; and he began to ask himself whether there was not in them something unreal, and whether in the very fact of his being so distracted by them, there was not something contemptible. "Perhaps," he re-



flected, "when I am no longer divided from her, I shall find that I no longer care for her. Nothing can redeem my conduct except the reality, the enduring quality, of my main motive. If I find my motive fail me—if I find this affection of mine to have been a mere caprice, or a piece of sentimental self-indulgence, I shall hardly know which to do first—to fall on myself as a brute who has trifled with her life, or laugh at myself as the fool, the self-made pauper, the deliberately obscure man who has ruined his own. I sometimes doubt whether, after all, our conventional moralists may not be right, and whether a man who acts as I have done is ever sincerely unselfish ; whether he will ever attest the love, of which he makes so much, by any serious sacrifice—for as to giving up fame and fortune, I can't tell ; but it is just beginning to dawn on me that this may be thought to resemble recklessness more than heroism."

When he reached the hotel, however, these new and formidable misgivings were, for the time, at all events, dissipated by an unlooked-for piece of intelligence. As he entered the hall the first person whom he encountered was Mrs. Schilizzi's maid, who was just coming out of the office. She started and smiled at the sight of him, and hastened up to him to say that she had just been sent down by Madame to find if he had yet arrived ; and that, if he had, Madame hoped he would come and breakfast with her. "Where ?" asked Grenville. There was something in the message that surprised him. "In her own salon," said the maid. This surprised him further, as, since the departure of the Princess, she had had all her meals in the restaurant. He had no time to reflect, however. It was nearly twelve already, and, following the

maid, with a beating heart, the door of the salon was being presently opened for him, and Mrs. Schilizzi was rising from a sofa to meet him. There was a smile in her eyes, half reproachful and half deprecating, and in the drooping poise of her head there was something that pleaded timidly. They looked at each other for a moment or two without speaking. Then everything else gave way to gladness. They moved toward each other. She was close to him ; but suddenly some solemn influence seemed to arrest her gently. She took his hand meekly. There was no passionate embrace, but, hanging her head, she offered her soft cheek to his lips.

"Bobby," she began, with her eyes looking on the ground. She faltered. She naively showed how little she could command her words. "Bobby—I want to tell you something. Here—come—sit down."

They sat together on the sofa, and still she said nothing. He, with the tide of returning tenderness overwhelming him, put his arm about her and tried to draw her toward him. At first she yielded. Her eyes went out to meet his ; and then, sharply but not roughly withdrawing herself, "Don't," she exclaimed, "don't ; I can't bear it. O Bobby, why do you distress me ? Why do you tempt me to be so wicked ?"

He was startled. Her reproach, which was one he never had heard before, coincided strangely with his late accusation of himself ; but he was conscious of one thing for which he had not just now credited himself—the reality of his own pain at the mere thought of having wounded her. All he could say was, "I don't know how to answer you. Forgive me."

"I suppose," she said, "you must think me very odd

and capricious. When Paul is well, and able to take care of himself, I don't so much mind what I do ; but when he is ill I can't take advantage of that." .

" Ill ! " he exclaimed, quietly moving away from her. " Irma, I quite agree with you. But you never told me he was ill."

" Didn't I ? No, I suppose not. But he is ; and both the children—they are poorly too. The doctor doesn't know yet what the illness is, but I have been very anxious, and busy too—nursing all of them. As for Paul, I annoy him if I am much in his room ; but he likes me, from time to time, to go and take his orders. He finds I attend to them better than anyone else, and if anything goes wrong, he has more pleasure in abusing me. But as for the children, I am with them nearly all day. If it hadn't been for this, I should have written to you sooner ; and then," she added, looking at him with an odd smile, " in spite of everything I was expecting that you would write to me. Dear, sit away, please, a little farther still. I hear them. They are coming with the luncheon."

He asked her during the meal about the several symptoms of the invalids. The children, she said, seemed merely to have caught some chill—they were suffering from stiff necks, and had been ordered to keep their beds. Mr. Schilizzi had nothing so definite to complain of. " I fancy," she said, " it may be his liver, for he constantly feels drowsy, sometimes he is sick, and altogether he has no strength for anything, except to read novels as he lies in bed, and drink champagne, and eat any delicacies he fancies—which, oddly enough, the doctor lets him do. You see, Bobby, I have brought you back from your castle to see nobody except a poor sick-nurse—and even

of her you will only see a little. And oh!" she said, "tell me this—I was so glad to see you, I had forgotten all about it. That other woman—tell me that you don't love her. You do. I believe you do. If you desert me now, you will kill me."

A waiter at this moment entered, and asked her if she could receive the doctor. "Of course," she replied, "instantly." And then, turning to Grenville, "I must ask you," she said, "to go. I shall be busy for I don't know how long. But if you will come back at five, I could see you for half an hour and give you some tea, and we could then speak about dinner. Good-by. Don't wait a moment longer."

He went. He got rid of the hours as best he could. He was touched and troubled by her anxieties, but he could not feel unhappy. In the first place, the doubts with which he had tormented himself during the drive, as to the reality of his own attachment to her, had been dispelled by his experiences in her presence. "Whenever I am near you," he said to himself, "all my doubts vanish. My life melts into yours." But besides this, satisfaction from another source welled up in his heart, and lifted him to a level of peace to which he had been long a stranger. This was derived from the sight of her in the midst of her trying duties. The mere fact of her performing them was hardly in itself remarkable, but the complete self-forgetfulness, the almost religious devotion with which, from his knowledge of what each shade of manner meant in her, he saw she was giving herself to their performance, elated him with a consciousness of her depth of truth and goodness. She was vindicating his own judgment of her, when she had felt doubtful of her-

self. She was showing him that he had not been soothing her anxieties with sophisms when he told her that whatever the world might think of her, whatever at moments she might be tempted to think of herself, her faith to him had not divided her from her duty to others, and that everything in woman which is true and noble had been kindled and developed, not extinguished by her loving him. He thought of that first expedition he made with her—of that drive to the Pasha's castle, and of the way she had impressed him by her sensitiveness to the beauty of nature—by her solemn and hushed delight in it. The suffering of those belonging to her seemed to touch her in a corresponding way. Just as beauty roused in her a craving prayer to appreciate it, so suffering roused in her an impulse of the same kind to spend herself in the service of relieving it. As he left her room after luncheon he had met her maid in the corridor, who told him that for three nights Madame had hardly slept.

Returning at the time she mentioned, he found her awaiting him at the tea-table. She was flushed and agitated, and there was a trouble in her lips and eyes, exactly like that of a child lost in a crowd. "O Bobby," she said, "I'm so glad you've come ; and yet I don't know if I ought to allow you near me. Paul's illness has declared itself. It's the worst form of diphtheria. If you're not afraid of me, sit down, and advise me. I'm half distracted."

"Afraid !" said Grenville with a laugh, which he saw was a spark of comfort to her. She smiled faintly, but gratefully. She poured him out some tea, and then went on more slowly :

"The doctor suspected what was the matter, but he

could not be quite sure, and he did not wish to alarm me I've so much to tell you. Let me speak about Paul first. You remember a woman—don't, you—that he admired here? Well, even although my continued presence annoyed him, I should have been with him more than I have been if the doctor had not informed me that his constant companion was this woman. Of course, neither Paul nor she had a notion of what was the matter with him ; and he used to make her presents to induce her to sit and talk with him. Weak as he was, he used to laugh and chatter with her. But now, as the doctor says, of course she will not return—not only because of the danger, but because the symptoms are not agreeable. Poor creature ! ” she went on, “ I was sorry to see him coughing. I've been wiping his lips and doing all sorts of things for him, but the worst of it is that the fact of my doing them seems in itself to irritate him. I don't mind for myself, but I could see it was so bad for him. He struggled to raise his voice, in order to find fault with me—especially when, for a second or two, I think I must have closed my eyes, for I am very tired—and that did something to his larynx, and his cough got worse than ever.”

“ How is he now ? ” asked Grenville, hardly knowing what to say.

“ The nurse is with him now. With her, I fancy, he will be quieter. When she came into the room he smiled at her ; and to me, without looking at me, but as if he was speaking to his pillow, ‘ My dear,’ he said, ‘ you can go.’ I went. There was nothing else to do ; and, anyhow, soon I should have had to go to the children. But now about them—do you know what the doctor says ?

What they have had has been just the same thing—diphtheria. It has, however, been a very mild attack ; and now they are fast recovering. He knew about it before, and he told me not to kiss them, because, he said, they might give me a cold. He thought they would soon be well, and he didn't wish to frighten me. He's a kind man. But—O Bobby, tell me, do I bore you ? ”

She looked into his eyes searchingly. He tried to shape an answer, but his lips only trembled. She understood him. Her eyes told him so. She leaned toward him and continued : “ All this,” she said, “ is only the preface to my troubles. The children, though they are supposed to be recovered, are still, according to the doctor, in a very delicate state ; and the great thing for them soon—not tomorrow, perhaps, but next day—will be change of air. They will want most careful watching for weeks and weeks. The doctor has lent me a book. For the last ten minutes I've been reading it ; so far as I can see, it may be two months before we can be sure that they are really strong again. Tell me—what am I to do ? Where am I to send them ? And must I go with them too ? It would kill me to leave them ; but then, Bobby—can you tell what I am thinking of ? If I don't leave my children, I shall have to desert Paul. Give me your advice. Help me. Think for me. I am bewildered.”

“ I should like,” said Grenville, “ to share all your troubles, except your bewilderment. It is lucky I don't share that. I think your course is clear. Your children require you far more than your husband does. At all costs you ought to remain with them.”

She walked to the window, turning her face away from him. He watched her. He heard a slight sob, and a

slight movement showed that she was gulping down some emotion. Returning to him with swimming eyes, "Ah," she said, "but I feel this." She came close to him. She laid her face on his shoulder. "I feel this," she went on with difficulty; "I have never wronged my children, but I have wronged Paul; so I want to repay him over and over again." She looked up at him with a sudden momentary smile. "I shall make myself in that way more worthy of you. Don't be shocked at what I say. I daresay you don't agree with me; and so far as my thoughts go, I can't *think* I have wronged him. But from habit, from the way one's been brought up, from the way even conventional opinion has somehow got into our blood, I *feel* that I have wronged him, though I daresay the feeling is irrational; and I want to cauterize this feeling by suffering for him—by wearing myself out for him."

"Irma," he said, "whatever my thoughts may be, I, too, at times, have a feeling resembling yours. Till now I have been shy of telling you of it; but I can never again have a secret from you. Little Irma, I understand you entirely. But come, whatever we feel, our business is to be practical. Let us just consider first what it is possible to do about the children. The most obvious course would, I think, be to send them to the Princess."

"No," she said. "No. They are never well at the castle."

"Well," he said, "then let the Princess take them somewhere. I have it. I happened to hear at the Pasha's that the Count's hotel in the forest is now formally opened, and that he has secured an excellent doctor, who is to live there during the season. One would not wish to bring a chance of infection to the hotel, but I could



get Count T—— to put the lodge at your disposal. You would send the children with nurses, or, if you liked, you could take them yourself there ; and whether you would stay there or come back to your husband, you would be able to settle afterward."

A nurse here entered, asking Mrs. Schilizzi if there were any further questions which she wished to ask the doctor. "I wish to ask him one," Grenville answered quickly ; and, springing up, he hastened out into the passage. He came back in a minute or two. "I am glad," he said, "that I spoke to him, for he told me something, which to you he could not have put so strongly. He has seen Mr. Schilizzi again, and he feels particularly anxious that you should leave him for the next twelve hours to the care of the two nurses. If you are there—as you have told me—from time to time he excites himself. Nothing is so bad for him as this, and, therefore, for his sake just at this juncture it will be kindest not to go to him. Will you promise me not to do so?" She looked at him doubtfully, as if she thought he was trying to deceive her.

"He's not worse, is he?"

"No," said Grenville, "no. You may keep away from him with a perfectly clear conscience."

"Well," she said, "if it's for his good, I will."

"That's right," exclaimed Grenville, with an accent of great relief. "And now about the children ; what I propose to do is this. If you approve I will at once go to Count T—— (he's at home, as I happen to know) and will ask him about the lodge. Then by the evening train I will go on to the Princess. I shall reach the castle before she has gone to bed, and I will be back

here in the early morning, having arranged everything."

"Will you really," she said, "do all this for me?"

Her wondering incredulity, which melted as she spoke into gratitude, profoundly touched him. "Do me one little kindness," he said, "lend me the doctor's book—I should like to look at it during my journey."

She gave it to him and he was gone. He found the Count at home, who received him with the greatest courtesy, and at once placed the lodge at the disposal of himself or of his friends. He then hurried on to the train, which was to take him to the Princess. On the way he studied the book. He fancied that with more or less accuracy he could make out the general course, which this disease, varying so in various cases, was taking with Paul Schilizzi. Whatever the mother had done and suffered for her children would not have surprised Grenville, though it might have moved him afresh to some new act of reverence for the beauty of her passionate maternity; but with regard to her husband, toward whom, as he knew well, patience was the highest feeling, and indifference the kindest, which his conduct and character made it possible for her to entertain or cultivate—with regard to her husband the case was quite different. That she should see him properly cared for and supplied with the best attendance, that whatever he wished her to do she should do and do willingly; this was natural enough. But what she had been doing, still more what she wished to do, went far beyond this. So far as his wishes went, his illness made few claims upon her. To him a nurse's care would have been just as welcome as hers; and the only thanks she received were either neglect or anger. And

yet, in spite of this, she longed to do for him whatever was hardest—whatever to herself was naturally most repugnant ; and what it was to which she was thus devoting herself, Grenville realized now, for the first time, as he read the account of the disease, and the attentions which were required by the patient. She had mentioned to him lightly that the symptoms were not agreeable. He now saw, from something else which had been told him by the doctor, and fixed his attention on certain special paragraphs, that “these not agreeable symptoms” really comprised everything which could try and nauseate constitutions far stronger than hers. The infected air alone would for her be physical martyrdom ; and there was nothing to sustain her, not even the sense that she was wanted—nothing but the passionate wish to be true to an ideal of duty. And for the sake of this she had not only watched and suffered, but had done so, despite all provocation, with a tender and unfailing patience. These thoughts possessed him during the whole journey, not so much multiplying, as expanding themselves and taking possession of him. “*Quia multum amavit*,” he several times exclaimed to himself ; and once he said, “Let me only be worthy of her—let her only love me till I die—and I shall not be afraid of death.”

The Princess had been forewarned by telegraph, both of his coming and the cause of it. The children were her idols. She was awaiting Grenville impatiently. He told her of a scheme he had proposed for sending them to the Count’s hunting-lodge, together with all details as to the neighboring doctor. She approved highly, praising his readiness of resource ; and when he asked her if she herself was coming, she answered petulantly :

"Of course I am," as if she resented its being doubted. "My maid will see about packing my things to-night ; and if the children can be moved to-morrow, I shall be ready to go with them. But the lodge ; will that be ready ?"

"Yes, it will," said Grenville. "There is a train which passes your station at three o'clock in the morning. I return by that. I shall reach Lichtenbourg by seven. I will ride over to the lodge. I can get there by half-past ten ; and I'll engage that by to-morrow afternoon the whole place is fit for you."

"My poor friend," said the Princess, with motherly pity, "you're almost dropping with sleep. You look yourself as if you'd been ill enough for all three of them." Grenville laughed and roused himself, for he was indeed nearly exhausted. "I'll tell you," said the Princess, "who causes me most anxiety. That's Irma herself. Of course in remaining with her husband she incurs the very gravest danger ; and from what you tell me her husband does not require her."

"I can't tell," said Grenville, "how far she realizes the risk ; indeed I myself this afternoon knew very little about it ; but I made her promise me that, at all events till I returned, she would stick to her children, and leave him to the doctor and the nurse."

"I," said the Princess, "will write her a note for you to give her. Any scrap of paper will do. I have one here. Will you lend me a pencil ? Read it," she went on when she had finished. "There's no need for an envelope."

"I shall be with you," the note ran, "by the middle of the day to-morrow. You know I'm an expert nurse ; and you

know also that I'm a very determined old woman ; so I may as well tell you exactly what I mean to do. I am coming myself to take charge of your husband, and leave you free to do what is your only and obvious duty, and that is to be off at once with your children. For their sakes you have no business to run the smallest risk of becoming ill yourself, and unable to look after them. Every time you go into Paul's room—at all events after you get this letter—I shall consider that you are doing by them a cruel and unjustifiable act. I must speak strongly, because what I know I have to overcome in you is a temptation supplied by your goodness ; but you must resist it. If you don't, you will show yourself unpardonably selfish. There—I have done. Take that for a parting dig, which your old aunt gives you too soon, that she may not have to give it to you too late."

"Will that do?" said the Princess, screwing her eyes up, and a little pleased through her anxiety, with the kind of causticity of the ending.

Grenville said it was excellent.

"By the way," said the Princess, "you too had better be careful. Nothing makes a person so liable to take the infection as this exhaustion from which you are now suffering."

She looked at her watch, and advised him to take some rest on a sofa in an anteroom near the door, and gave orders that the porter should sit up to awake him.

When he found himself again in the train day was already breaking, and the damp gray morning was scented with leaves and grass. He told the guard to wake him at the proper place ; and, lulled by the freshness of the *air*, lost his trouble in sleep. A carriage was awaiting

him at his station. He slept again during the drive ; and it was not yet seven by the time he was back at the hotel. Maids and waiters were scrubbing the floors and door-steps ; last night's tobacco smoke was floating over the premises, and a smell of soap was mixed with it. To his great relief Fritz appeared in a moment, whom he begged to go instantly to Mrs. Schilizzi's maid, and inquire if her mistress was up, or if, at any rate, she were awake. An instant message was returned to him, asking him to go into her salon. He had not to wait long before the door of her bedroom opened ; and, with grave, floating eyes and a diaphanous flush in her cheeks, which a rose-colored dressing gown turned to a spectral pallor, she softly came toward him.

"I have," he said, "settled everything." He spoke eagerly, and, as he hoped, reassuringly. "The lodge is at your disposal for the children, and your aunt will be here by midday. She sees how to settle everything. Here is a letter she has written you. All is explained in that."

She read it through. As she did so her color deepened. She sank on the sofa.

"Sit down here," she said to him. "I have something to tell you. I wonder what you will say to me." As she spoke she was close to him, but suddenly starting back, "What am I doing?" she exclaimed. "I may give you this horrible illness."

"Nonsense," he said, suddenly drawing on his invention. "The infection can only be taken from a person in whom the illness is developed."

She moved again toward him and took his hand.

"Listen !" she gasped. "Do you know what it is I've

done? I've broken my word to you; and I've been again with Paul. He didn't know I was there; so I didn't excite or irritate him. His bed has curtains. I sat in a chair behind them. It was at night, and the room was dark; and I let the nurse sleep for an hour or two, and without his recognizing me, I did whatever there was to do. In some ways it's dreadful; only in seeing another struggling so, one forgets what one feels one's self; but I suppose one's body doesn't. For after two hours I fainted, and I was carried back to my room. But I couldn't keep away; and oh, Bobby, I can't now."

"Irma," he said, "were you only concerned, I would not try to dissuade you. But you know that I plead not for yourself, but for your children. I understand the reasons which commend to your own mind the other duty in preference to this. To do that duty seems to you a form of self-sacrifice. It is a form of self-sacrifice also to give it up. You will do most good to yourself by choosing what does most good to others."

"To be with the children," she said, "that in itself is heaven; and it seems to me now like running away from pain; and yet, when you speak of them, you disarm me. I have not the resolution to leave them; though—don't you think this?—for a week or so they could do without me?"

"You quite forget one thing," he urged. "You might by remaining here make yourself unable for many a week to go to them, or, Irma, perhaps forever. Have you any right to run that risk? Have you the heart to do it? You wouldn't run the risk of leaving them alone in the street. Can you bear the thought of leaving them alone in the world? As for your husband, you may safely

commit him to the Princess ; and I will remain here also, to do whatever I can do."

"I yield," she said. "I see that you must be right. To be away from that sick-room costs me far more than to remain in it. Go, dear friend, and arrange things as you please for me."

A horse was ordered for Grenville, while he ate a hasty breakfast ; and soon once more he was at the familiar hunting-lodge, making all necessary arrangements for Mrs. Schilizzi's arrival. Nothing escaped his forethought. Various provisions he ordered over from the hotel, and some articles of furniture which the manager kindly lent him. He had also a long interview with the doctor. Returning to Lichtenbourg, he found that the Princess had arrived, who was delighted—so far as the circumstances permitted of such an emotion—at finding her advice had been taken, not dreaming that it had needed seconding. Carriages were ordered by the ever-useful Fritz : and almost before Mrs. Schilizzi knew what had been done, her boxes had been packed and sent on with a couple of servants ; while a capacious landau, specially constructed for invalids, was waiting at the door in the warm afternoon sunshine, ready for herself, a nurse, and the two children. The briskness of the Princess's manner was of great service on the occasion. She told her niece she was "silly and wrong and selfish" for having any reluctance to do what so clearly was pointed out to her, not only by duty, but by ordinary common sense ; and with a semblance of anger, which acted like a moral tonic, and was sweetened at the same time by an undercurrent of deep kindness, she almost drove her out of the house into the carriage, where she



carefully packed the children, kissing them as she did so; and, as the party drew off she stood waving her wrinkled hand at them, and forcing a cheerful smile, till a turn in the road hid them; and her hand found sudden occupation in brushing tears from her eyes.

"Schilizzi," she said to Grenville, as they turned indoors together, "is going on much the same. I have not yet seen him. I refrained from doing so until my niece was out of the way. I give you fair warning that in another hour I may be infectious; and so, if you are wise, you will avoid me as a dangerous character."

"My dear Princess," said Grenville, "I am not going to leave Lichtenbourg till you and all belonging to you are completely free from your anxieties. I only wish I could help you more than I can."

## CHAPTER XXIII.

**CERTAINLY** at that moment he was incapable of doing anything. He had had no sleep, except in unrefreshing snatches, since he left the Pasha's castle, and now that the chief object of his exertions was secured, physical weariness, long held at bay, asserted its rights at last, and he slept soundly till the evening. His first care, on waking, was to ascertain where the Princess would dine, in order that he might keep her company and not seem to desert her. He was told that she would dine in her sitting room, where he was at liberty to dine also, and she would be glad of his company, though she advised him not to give it her. They met. The Princess retained her spirits wonderfully. She said that the invalid had every comfort possible, and that the badness of his temper gave her great confidence in his strength. She then turned the conversation to general matters, and sat down opposite to him, slightly smelling of disinfectants. The moment the meal was over she left him to his own devices, and he wandered out into the gardens restless and discontented.

With the departure of Mrs. Schilizzi the whole place had become different. The gardens had lost their beauty, the whole place had lost its interest. Everywhere there was a flatness and a vacancy. But this was not the case with regard to the place only. He felt it to

be the case also with the state of his own mind. His high-strung ideas of the duty of pain relaxed themselves, and resolutions that had soared high in the morning now came fluttering down with nerveless wing.

Whether the devil is a real person or no, it is easy to see how, without any external evidence, a belief in his reality may have arisen; for there are certain trials or adventures in the history of most minds, which, though they may be accounted for otherwise, can yet hardly be vividly described, except by representing some alien spirit as an actor in them. Through such a crisis Grenville passed this evening. The devil spoke to him in a tone of insidious languor, telling him that now he might let things take their course, arguing that he had done already far more than was needed of him; that to hang about the sick man's room, and live habitually with his nurse, was a mere Quixotic madness, endangering himself, and pleasing nobody else. "Wait quietly," said the devil, "and the sick man will most likely die. You could not save him; you will have nothing with which to reproach yourself, and then life will be plain for you, and Irma will be yours forever. Ah, my friend, I can see," the voice continued, "that you still are moved by the example of an emotional woman, and you still fancy that, by emulating that example, you will be achieving some higher and closer union with her. You say you will be worthier of her. My friend, you will be simply a fool. The best service you can render her is to keep yourself in good health, so that, whatever happens, you may be able to cheer her and protect her." The thrust of each fresh suggestion Grenville resisted passively; but he felt that they weakened, even if they did not

wound him. Then the devil seemed to slip into his very self, speaking with his own voice, and telling him he was a fool and a dreamer—that all his passion was nothing but a wicked weakness, that all the duties which seemed to arise from it were fantastic, and that if he were a man he would once for all break free from it and lay his heart open to some other and healthier love. Then the devil, with a low, whispering laugh, noiselessly left him, not dissatisfied with his work.

There are probably moments in the lives of the best of men when every efficient force in them is corrupted, except the will. Grenville's will in this case had not been conquered; but as he wandered on listlessly, he felt that it was weak and faint. Still it had force sufficient, after no very long interval, to turn him back to the hotel, and prompt him to inquire for the doctor. Before he could see him he had a considerable time to wait. He was hardly conscious what he should say to him when he did so; and, going into the reading room, which he very rarely entered, he began stupidly to study the Austrian papers. At last the waiter told him the doctor was in the hall. He went out, and when he began to talk his voice sounded to him like that of another person. He had a sense of curiosity as to what he should say next. He inquired for Mr. Schilizzi, and was told that the case was serious. Then he said, "Is there no way in which I can help? Can I be of any help to the Princess, and take anything off her hands?"

"No," said the doctor, "I honestly don't think so, unless you will go to a house about half a mile distant, and see if it is possible to engage another nurse. I am sorry to tell you that, in coming up the stairs in the dark,

the Princess has sprained her ankle, and it has been necessary to put her to bed."

Grenville suddenly laid his hand on the doctor's arm. "Come with me," he said, "outside for a moment. I can talk to you better there. Is a man no use? Can I not act as a nurse? The Princess is my oldest friend. I am nearly connected with the family. If you can, my good friend, for God's sake make use of *me*."

The doctor looked at him. "Are you at all aware," he said, "of the duties you would have to perform, or the conditions you would have to perform them in? I doubt if, physically, you could endure it. Have you had any experience of illness?"

"Listen," said Grenville; "I'll tell you what the conditions are—I'll tell you what I should have to do." And he rapidly ran through the various details with which the book he had studied had now made him familiar. "As for my nerves," he said, "don't trouble yourself about them. When a man is as anxious as I am, he's no time to be sick."

The doctor considered for a moment. "Well," he said, "till a second nurse could be got, your help would, no doubt, be valuable. You could at least relieve for an hour or two the woman who is with him now. She'll tell you what to do, and she can then get some sleep in a chair. But stay—the patient is often extremely irritable, and a face that he knows—one can't tell why—might excite him."

"Stay," said Grenville, "I will tell you what I will do. I happen to have with me a false beard and whiskers, which were got for me under very different circum-

stances. They will quite disguise me, and I can pass myself off as your assistant."

"Well," said the doctor, "in this case talk German. He understands it perfectly, and he will never detect your accent."

The disguise was not one that required long for adjustment, and Grenville presently, under the doctor's guidance, was crossing the garden to the annex where the sick man lay. His will by this time was vigorous and wide awake; and though his imagination menaced him with disgust, and though every nerve was shrinking, his resolution never wavered.

When, however, he entered the bedroom, the doctor, who watched his face, saw an involuntary change in it; and snatching up a bottle of salts, made him smell them, whispering:

"You won't be able to stand it."

"Nonsense," said Grenville, with an effort. "I'm perfectly right already. Tell the nurse who I am, and let me be shown my duties."

They were not difficult, though not a few of them were repulsive; and in one sense they were made doubly so by the fact of their object being a man who was repulsive to him, even when in health. But there was at work in him a species of spiritual lever, acting on some undefined fulcrum, which, the more physical disgust pushed against one extremity, urged him on in an opposite direction with the other. Sharply awake as he was to the various offices required of him, of his other physical circumstances he became but half conscious. The dim light falling across the bedclothes; the collection of bottles,

glasses, handkerchiefs, and basins by the bedside, and the discolored face of the sufferer, on which suffering had but emphasized a leer, together with the oppression of the atmospheric conditions, all this became for him like some frightful dream, merely oppressing his senses, but leaving his mind untouched. As the hours wore on, he felt that he hardly knew himself. An instinctive and tender adroitness was actuating his arms and hands; his eyes and ears were unremittingly watchful; he shrank from no office, no matter how repulsive. Who the sufferer was, or how the sufferer was connected with him, almost escaped his mind. He saw merely a man who, antipathetic to him in health, was even more antipathetic now—who touched him with no sense of compunction, or, except as a human being, with any sense of compassion. And yet over this man no mother could have watched more carefully, listening to his breathing, which seemed gradually growing more difficult; and raising him with an arm when a sudden spasm woke him.

It was long past midnight, when the door softly opened and the doctor again appeared. Grenville was watching. The nurse was still sleeping.

"Not another nurse to be had," the doctor said in a whisper. "If he ever thanks anybody, he ought to thank you."

Struggling with a fit of suffocation, the sufferer started up in his bed. Instinctively, in an instant, Grenville's arm was supporting him.

"Let me," said the doctor, "take your place for a moment."

He sat close by the bedside, and made his various observations. He put some medicine to Mr. Schilizzi's

lips, and applied some ice to his throat. Then drawing Grenville aside, he shook his head.

"It's a grave case," he whispered. "It takes its course slowly ; but the false membrane continues to increase in his throat. Stay—let us wake the nurse. You have relieved her long enough ; and I will finish what I have to tell you outside."

He touched the sleeping woman, who opened her eyes instantly, and resumed, with a mechanical readiness, her former station by the bed ; and having given her a few instructions, he went out with Grenville.

"Are you, Herr Grenville," he said, "a relation of Herr Schilizzi's ?"

"No," said Grenville, with a feeling of contemptuous indignation at the question. "My sole knowledge of him, or interest in him, is due to the family into which he married."

There was something in his tone which seemed to relieve the doctor, who said :

"Then in that case I suppose I may speak quite freely. Her Schilizzi's case is grave for certain peculiar reasons. He was not in a healthy condition when this disease attacked him ; and he voluntarily admitted the fact to me, making a joke of it as he did so. He'll find that it's no joke now. Herr Grenville, I may tell you this : his body at this moment is a mass of complicated corruption. He may pull through this attack. I shall judge better to-morrow ; but I think it probable that, within a very short time from now, we may be driven to an operation on the trachea. If that is so, it will give us one hope more, and our only hope, though one which is too frequently disappointed."



They were by this time in the garden ; and touching Grenville's arm, the doctor said kindly :

"And now let me prescribe for you. Go to bed at once. It's a prescription which I shall follow myself."

For a time, however, tired as he was, Grenville had no wish to do so. One delight in the middle of trouble was overwhelming him ; and this was the delight of tasting the pure night air. There was dew on the leaves and the beds of sleeping flowers. He approached his face to a rose-bush, and the drops of the night baptized it. He was conscious of a scent of jasmine. Suddenly exhilarated, he walked away rapidly to remoter parts of the garden. There was more light than the stars, though the sky was full of them, would account for. He thought there must be a moon somewhere ; but having looked for its disk in vain, he recognized the pallor of the morning, stealing up already over the heights of the stirred foliage.

Thanks to faithful Fritz, who had slept in the hall to wait for him, he easily gained his room, when his rest was profound and dreamless.

His first care next morning was to inquire about the condition of the Princess. He learnt that she could not move, but would shortly be carried to her sofa. He sent word to her that he would come to her as soon as she could receive him, and bring the doctor with him, who would tell her all the news. He wrote at the same time a note to the doctor himself, so as to decide before making the visit how the news might be most judiciously told.

"I find," said the doctor, who came to Grenville's bedroom, "that the patient is going on precisely as I pre-

dicted ; and in the course of to-day I think it is quite possible that nothing will be left for us but the operation of which I spoke to you. Everything will be in readiness ; and it happens that only last week I had a new apparatus from Vienna, for removing, through the tube, the particles of false membrane."

"Has not something of the same kind," said Grenville, "been done by the mouth of the operator?"

"The operator," replied the doctor, "who did that, might as prudently swallow poison. His danger would be infinitely greater than that from which he relieved the patient."

"Well," said Grenville, "we need not sicken ourselves with discussing the question. Let us go to the Princess ; and this is what I wish you to tell her ; that Mr. Schilizzi, though dangerously ill, has developed no unexpected symptoms. The disease is running its course—anything to keep her quiet. And above all, tell her that—not that she is not wanted, but that all her own instructions are being carried out to the letter."

The doctor was an excellent diplomatist ; he even bettered the suggestions made to him : and the Princess, though she looked worn, smiled when he had finished his communication.

"And now," said Grenville, appealing to her, "do you think you could do this—write a note to your niece, which I will send by my servant, begging her not to worry herself, and inclosing a note from our friend here—I am sure he will kindly write it—saying again what he has just said to you, and telling her that even were she here there would be nothing whatever for her to do."

The two notes were written, and Grenville added one of his own.

"And now," said the doctor, as soon as they had left the sitting room, "I'm sure, Herr Grenville, you had better to-day take a drive or ride into the country. Later in the day no doubt I should be glad to see you again, but if you wish to take care of others you must first take care of yourself."

Many people who are subject to sea-sickness feel the touches of the malady before they have set foot on their vessel. The thought of the sick room, and all its unwonted incidents, affected Grenville now in a very similar way. He was brave enough in enduring it for the first time, because past experience had supplied him with no terrors of anticipation ; but now the case was different. Still, without knowing why, he stood his ground, and declared that at all events, before walking or riding, he would in his former disguise personate the doctor's assistant, and visit the patient in his company.

"Stop!" he exclaimed. "Is not that your servant looking for you?"

"It is," said the doctor. "I see by his face he wants me. Come, Herr Grenville ; if you mean to come you must be quick about it."

At the top of the stairs, outside the bedroom door, was a man who said in a whisper :

"I have here the case of instruments. You have the key yourself. It seems to me they will be needed."

Through the thin door came the sound of a violent paroxysm of coughing, followed by a straining for breath that was like a prolonged groan ; and a moment or two later the sufferer had sunk back exhausted, and, as

Grenville thought, dead. The doctor, however, knew otherwise.

"Herr Grenville," he said, moving presently from the bed, "I am glad that you insisted on coming with me. It relieves me of a certain responsibility. The course of the disease has surprised me by the rapidity of its development. I wished, as I explained to the Princess, to have had a consultation this morning, but for that now there is absolutely no time. If I do not act instantly, Herr Schilizzi may be dead in half an hour. His only chance lies in my operating at this moment. You can be of no assistance; you will be only trying your nerves. You will therefore forgive me if I recommend you to leave the room."

Very slowly Grenville was preparing to do so; when a low exclamation from the doctor's assistant startled him. The box had been opened, and though the requisite tube was there the suction apparatus of which the doctor had spoken was missing.

"Mein Gott!" the assistant exclaimed. "It was taken out in order to have one of the screws adjusted. I will hasten and fetch it instantly."

"Instantly!" repeated the doctor. "Twenty minutes at the shortest. Listen—he is choking again. He'll be dead before you are back again."

Before more could be said Grenville unexpectedly interfered. Seizing the attendant by the arm, "Go to the patient," he said, and then addressing himself to the doctor, "Don't discompose yourself," he said. "My mouth shall be the apparatus. Not a word—I insist. I know precisely what I am doing. Have no scruple in using me. You have a family dependent on you; no one

depends on me. Quick—quick!—out with your tools and begin about it.”

“I tell you,” said the doctor, “you might just as well drink poison. At best the chance of saving the patient is small ; but it is large as compared with the chance against your saving yourself. Besides, it is an operation of considerable delicacy and difficulty.”

“Nonsense !” exclaimed Grenville. “I order you to let me have my way. Delicacy!—difficulty ! By God ! man, do you take me for an idiot ? I can spit through a tube—I can blow peas through a tube. Do you mean to tell me that sucking is less easy than spitting ?”

“You,” said the doctor, overcome by his determination, “are able to answer for yourself ; that man on the bed is not. I should not be justified in refusing this last chance you offer him ; though I still hold to my opinion that you are not justified in offering it.”

The room for a time was full of subdued sounds. At last the assistant exclaimed, “See, he is breathing freely !” And the doctor was pressing a glass to Grenville’s lips, saying, “Take this—take it ; and wash your mouth out thoroughly.”

Grenville was docile. He did exactly as he was bidden ; but before he retired, as he did almost directly, “Promise me,” he said to the doctor, “to say nothing to the Princess of what I did ; nor write anything about it to Mrs. Schilizzi either ; at all events, not till we see that I am none the worse for it. I am not anxious myself, but it might add to their anxieties if they knew. You’re a good fellow, so promise me to be faithful in this.” The doctor promised. “And now,” Grenville continued, “as soon as I have changed my clothes, and done all the little

things that you advise, I shall tell the Princess that the patient is now much easier; and ride over to the hunting-lodge, and give the same news to his wife."

"You couldn't do better," said the doctor. "Tell your news while it is true."

The second relief from the tainted atmosphere; the conviction, which he could not distrust, that he had himself done his utmost; the hurry of his toilet, and the luxury of his bath; the bearing of his news to the Princess, and his preparation for his ride left him at first but little time for thought; but so soon as he was by himself, riding rapidly through the forest, with the resinous smell softly blowing against his nostrils, and with the motion exhilarating his nerves, and filling him with the joy of living, the question at last began to confront him strangely, "Am I carrying in me the seed of death? Is not this my last week of the air, the forests, and the sunshine?" It was a question he could not answer, but he managed to elbow it aside; or rather, against his will, it was elbowed aside by another—a question relating to the probability not of his own death, but that of Mr. Schilizzi. This had occurred to him again and again before, but he had resolutely refused to dwell on it, or the prospects which lay beyond it; and absorbed as he had been in practical and painful effort, he had repelled it easily. But now it presented itself to him more importunately and vividly; and he felt he had earned a right to speculate on the consequences of a death, which he had risked, and perhaps forfeited, his own life to avert. This mood, however, did but last for a moment or two. He had hardly yielded to it before it shocked and disgusted him; and he presently exercised it by sending his thoughts

forward to the relief, if not to the pleasure, which he would be bringing to Mrs. Schifizzi, by news which pointed to the recovery, not the death of her husband. He soon forgot everything else in this. The pleasure to himself even of being once more in her presence, and of reading the secret in her eyes, which swam in them through all her trouble, was a prospect which gave place in his mind to the pleasure of seeing the relief, which, unconnected with himself, would come to her from the news he brought her. As he approached the lodge, the first thing that caught his eyes was her red dress and her parasol, motionless by the border of the lake. At the sound of hoofs she suddenly turned round, staring at him, as if doubtful as to who he was or what was his errand. As he drew near, however, and she recognized his face and his expression, she eagerly came forward with a smile of hope and of inquiry.

"I have come," he said, "to relieve you of the anxiety which I know must have been wearing you out here. You got the note which I sent over this morning?"

"Yes," she said. "How good of you. It arrived two hours ago."

"Well," he continued, "I have a later bulletin for you. He was far easier when I left him than he has been for the last twelve hours. You need not fret yourself because of your being here. There is nothing you could do for him that is not done by his attendants; and your presence might excite him; while with them he is quite quiet."

"And has he," she said, "not asked for me?"

"He has asked for no one," said Grenville. "He has not mentioned your name."

He wondered as he told her this whether she would be hurt by hearing it. A sound came from her that seemed to be a sigh of relief ; and yet a faint meaning of sadness was given to it when she said :

"Of course he didn't know how I sat up half the night with him ; and how, had nothing prevented me, I would be at his bedside still." Then her face brightened and softened into a smile, as, laying her hand on his arm, she said, "Come in and see the children. Have your horse put up, and I'll tell them to make some coffee for you."

She went with him to the stables ; but on turning back to the lodge :

"I think," he said to her, "I had better not see the children. I have been in his room ; and though I have changed my clothes, one never knows if there may not be some chance of infection. I hardly know, indeed, if I ought to remain with you."

"Bobby," she exclaimed, "don't go, I implore you. You won't hurt me ; and even suppose you would—if I had to consider no one except myself, I would say to you now, Give me death with your lips. Bobby, do you think that I am very wicked and inconsistent ? And you went to see him, did you ? And you sat by his bedside ? Darling, wait a little with me. We won't go in to the children. We will have our coffee outside, under the beech-tree, as we have done before. Do you remember ?"

When he said good-by he gently held her at a distance from him. He kissed her hand. This had been their sole endearment. In spite of this interview, however, or, to speak more truly, because of it, he rode back under the burden of a deeper gloom than he had brought with him. He had just been seeing a vision of all that life



held for him ; what it might give him fully if Paul Schilizzi died ; what it might give him partially if Paul Schilizzi lived ; and the terrible thought settled down on him like a cloud that at this moment he was probably a doomed man, or that, worse still, if he was not doomed to death, his life would be blighted by some frightful and nameless taint. The slightness of his medical knowledge allowed him to exaggerate his apprehensions ; and he passed through the woods like Christian through the Valley of the Shadow of Death. But even now he was not conquered, or dispossessed of the spirit which had brought him into his present straits. Once or twice, mentally, he cursed Paul Schilizzi ; but he sharply checked the temper which prompted the passing outburst, and never for a moment allowed himself to complete the wish that anything which he had done during the past day and night had been not done. He even prepared his mind, should he find this to be required of him, for another vigil at the suffocating and odious bedside.

So as to give himself no time for flinching, the moment he reached Lichtenbourg he sent to inquire of the doctor if he could be of any further assistance ; and, while waiting for an answer, he hastened to the sitting room of the Princess, in order to give her a good account of her niece. She received the news with a smile, but it struck him as a rather indifferent one ; and setting it down to the pain of her sprained ankle, he asked her how it was, saying at the same time, "I suppose you have not been able to see Mr. Schilizzi."

"You haven't heard, then ?" she said, with a certain severity of accent. "And yet how should you ? I suppose you have seen nobody. Paul Schilizzi died about

---

an hour ago. There was another doctor present during the last moments; and it seems, at all events, that the best that could have been done was done. Had it not been for the operation performed on him, they tell me he must have died this morning. I'm sorry," she went on, as if anxious to relieve herself by finding fault with something, "I'm sorry that you should have troubled yourself to raise poor Irma's spirits, merely to make this heavy shock the heavier. Hush!" she said, "that is the doctor's voice in the passage."

"I sent to him, to inquire," said Grenville. "I suppose he has come to ask for me."

His voice as he spoke had a curious tremor in it. The Princess looked sharply up at him. He was standing near the open window, and she saw that he was shivering as if with cold. "Don't," she said, "stand in the draught, having made yourself hot with riding. Call in the doctor, and let us speak to him here."

The doctor entered, and answered Grenville's questions, giving him an assurance which he had already given the Princess, but which she, nevertheless, was pleased at hearing repeated, that Mr. Schilizzi at the end had had little conscious suffering, that he had expressed no wish to see any friends or relations, that he had missed the presence and had noticed the absence of nobody.

"I hope," said Grenville, "that you will assure Mrs. Schilizzi of that. Her natural impulse will be to reproach herself bitterly for having left him."

"If she had not left him," said the doctor, "I promise you I will assure her of this—that she might easily have had one of her children leaving her. Herr Grenville,

what's the matter with you? It seems that you have taken a chill."

"That's what I tell him," said the Princess. "Herr Doctor, you must make him take care of himself. Send him off to his room, and give him a hot bath."

This, indeed, the doctor presently did, telling Grenville that, after the danger he had incurred, it was impossible for him to be too careful, as even a common cold might develop into something which he else would escape completely. "As for this, it is nothing. Dine in your own room. I'll send you a draught which will give you a sound sleep; and to-morrow morning, I promise you, you shall be quite yourself again."

"One word," said Grenville. "As to Mrs. Schilizzi, she will have, of course, to be told. Will you go to the Princess and advise her as to writing a letter, and, if necessary, add a line of your own, emphasizing the points I mentioned?"

Grenville, for his own part, followed the doctor's advice, though, when the morning came, he hardly fulfilled his prophecy. He had, indeed, the comfort of a dreamless sleep, so he escaped the ferment of thoughts consequent on the new situation; but as to his physical condition, though he no longer shivered, he felt languid and unwilling to rise, and he realized gradually that he had a certain soreness in his throat. He did his best to convince himself that this was only fancy; and, though it cost him an effort, he at last got up and dressed. He had just finished his toilet when the doctor made his appearance, partly to bring some news to him, and partly to visit him professionally. Having questioned and examined him as to his symptoms: "Ah," he said, "I don't think

this will be much. You need not alarm yourself, but you ought to be very careful. I should have preferred that you had stayed in bed to-day, and, indeed, I should advise that presently you went back to it again. But, as you are up, you will be doing no great harm to yourself if you will come down with me for a minute or two to the Princess. She wants to see you before Frau Schilizzi's arrival."

The Princess was better. With the aid of a stick she could walk a little, and she sat up instead of lying down on the sofa. The alertness, however, which was visible in her whole expression, Grenville saw at a glance was largely due to nervousness, and the questions she began to put to him showed him the same thing.

"I want you," she said, "to tell me once again exactly what you told Irma yesterday about her husband. It seems to me you must have spoken to her much too hopefully; and, if you did, the shock will be all the worse. When she comes I shall want you both to be present—you, Herr Doctor, especially—in order to assure her that she could have done no good by being here."

Grenville was proceeding to explain for a second time what it was he had said—and he felt himself, as he did so, that he had, perhaps, erred in the way the Princess declared he had. "But it was," he continued, "precisely because I knew how much her sensitive nature was suffering under her enforced absence, that I wished, since there was no question of bringing her back here, to relieve her from the tension of an anxiety that could do no good to anyone."

The Princess had no time to reply to this; for he was still speaking when the door of the room opened, and

Mrs. Schilizzi herself entered. Haste and some overwhelming emotions were visible in her eyes and cheeks, and in her lips, which were at first compressed and then opened as if gasping.

"And is it true?" she said, as they all looked in silence at her. "Is there really no hope?"

"Doctor," said the Princess, "you explain it all to her."

The doctor, without mentioning the operation, quietly explained to her that the course the disease had taken, though not unusual, had been in this case unexpected; and again assured her that her presence would not only have been no help to her husband, but would have been unperceived by him. The words seemed, however, to make but little impression upon her.

"If," she said, speaking to the Princess, "I had only been with him when he died—if I were only at this moment tired and ill with having watched by him—it would be different. But now—you have all of you kept me away. You have made me guilty of desertion, for which I can never forgive myself, and for which I can never atone." Her voice suggested pain rather than ordinary grief. There was silence for a moment, then the Princess prepared to speak; but before she had delivered herself of more than a premonitory cough, Mrs. Schilizzi sharply turned to Grenville, and, with a hardening voice, said to him: "And you—you completely took me in. You told me he was better. You told me not to be anxious. If it hadn't been for you, I might have reached him in time. He was dying when you came to me; and with a lie you kept me away from him."

"Perhaps," said Grenville to the doctor, speaking with obvious difficulty, "you had better explain all to her—

nothing, you understand, that respects myself ; I merely refer to Mr. Schilizzi's illness. I told her that when I left the condition of the patient was easier."

"Frau Schilizzi," said the doctor, turning to her with great gravity; "Herr Grenville told you nothing but the truth. He forbore, by my advice, to go into needless details ; but if you wish it, I may as well explain them to you. Yesterday morning, your husband's condition became such that the only hope left us was to perform an operation on his throat, commonly resorted to in such circumstances. But for this, he must have died five hours earlier. The operation was successful, and had his health been good otherwise——"

But Mrs. Schilizzi would not suffer him to continue. "An operation !" she exclaimed. "He had suffered an operation and you, Mr. Grenville, told me nothing at all about it !" He was leaning against the wall. She rose up, and she went over to him. "Do you know," she exclaimed, "what you have done ? You have taken my last chance from me. You have forced me to neglect him ; you have allowed him to be neglected by others. You have killed him yourself, and the reproach of his death is mine. Speak to me, can't you ! I advise you to do so now : for never again shall you have an opportunity."

She seemed hardly to know what she was saying. One stinging sentence seemed to beget another. He looked at her fixedly with an expression of painful wonder. He tried to speak, but at first he had no voice ; then a word or two came, hoarse and accompanied by a cough.

"Oh," she exclaimed ironically, "and so you have a cough now, have you. Much good that will do you ! **you** may at least muster voice to answer me."

Here, however, there was a murmur made by the doctor. He had been watching Grenville intently, and listening to the sounds emitted by him : and now going up to him, and taking him forcibly by the arm, he led him out of the room, with a promptitude that insured compliance. "Go to your room," he said, "and get back to bed directly. In a few minutes I will be with you. Your life may depend upon your prudence."

Almost stupefied by the scene he had just gone through, Grenville went to his room with a dull, mechanical resignation : and the doctor returned to the other two, before either of them had uttered another syllable. He shut the door with a bang. In his cheeks was a flush of anger. He strode up to Mrs. Schilizzi, and confronted her with a look that terrified her. "Madame," he said, "that gentleman who has just left, has indeed done what you taxed him with and kept back from you—and begged me to do so also—the most remarkable incident connected with your husband's illness. Seeing, however, the manner in which you treat him, it will be best for you—it will be best for everyone—that I tell you the whole truth. I cannot allow you to be ignorant of it. Herr Grenville, madame, whom you charge with having killed your husband, and to whom you say you will never again speak, when your aunt, the Princess, was disabled, and one of the nurses failed me, attended your husband himself during the most trying night of his illness, with a nerve and a care which few trained nurses could have equaled ; and when, madame, that operation took place, which you blamed him for having concealed from you, it was solely his heroism which enabled it to take place at all. With his own mouth," said the doctor, his voice rising, "he performed the desperate function of

removing through the tracheotomy tube the membrane that was suffocating your husband. No man walking up to the cannon's mouth took his life in his hand more surely than did Herr Grenville then ; he did it, knowing that the danger was worse even than I dare explain to you : and events will have treated him with a favor which he had no right to reckon upon, if he is not now laying himself down in his bed, to await the death from which he struggled to save your husband."

"Doctor," cried the Princess shrilly, "stop—I order you to stop. Look at my niece. Can't you see what you are doing to her !"

Mrs. Schilizzi's face had indeed undergone a change. Its expression had softened into one of helpless sorrow. Her eyes were wide and appealing : then they became vacant. "Don't let him die !" she gasped, as her strength failed her : and the doctor in another moment had placed her unconscious on a sofa.

"You need not be alarmed," he said quietly, turning to the Princess. "She will come to herself presently."

The Princess showed by a look that she was sufficiently aware of this : and said with an anxious sharpness, "Is it really true that you are alarmed about Mr. Grenville ?"

"He has," said the doctor, "taken a slight chill, which, as I have seen during the last ten minutes, has already affected his throat : for seven days he will probably be a prisoner in his own room ; but I hope, as we have certainly taken the disorder in time, that he may escape any serious consequences, though the escape will be very narrow. If you will permit me to summon Frau Schilizzi's maid, I will go to a patient who needs my attention more."



## CHAPTER XXIV.

A WEEK later, sitting up in his bed, bearing traces at once of weakness and of returning health, Grenville was listening to the doctor's welcome announcement that he might leave his room, and enjoy the luxury of a drive ; while a day or two later, if he wished, he could leave Lichtenbourg. As soon as the doctor was gone, he turned to a little pile of notes, which were lying on a table close to him. It was evident that they had been read already. He began re-reading them.

The first consisted only of these few words. "Forgive me—forgive me. They will not let me come near you. They tell me you will soon be well. I wish I could kneel to you and once more say, 'Forgive me.'—Irma."

The second, which was dated the following day, was longer. "Your servant gave me your message. It was only 'thank you. Write again.' I believe you meant to show me that you are at all events not implacable. I must have been mad—mad—when I spoke of you as I did. This morning Paul was buried. All the world seemed so hushed and strange to me that, just as in church one is afraid to speak or laugh, I am afraid to let myself think or feel. But at least I may tell you that I hope you are not suffering. I may comfort myself with the confidence—the doctor gives me this—that your recovery will be rapid : and—once more—oh, forgive me."

Then came these, of which every day had brought one.

"The Princess goes home this afternoon. Her ankle is almost well. I too must leave. I am obliged to re-join my little ones. Thank you for your few words, which I could see you wrote with difficulty, telling me that my letters soothed and did not disturb you. I shall drive over to-morrow, perhaps taking the children with me, to inquire after you. And now shall I tell you one thing? Dare I? Will you think ill of me for it, considering what took place yesterday? Will you think—I don't know what I mean, but I will tell you something that I did. Last night I was told that you were sound asleep. My maid had just heard this from your servant, when I asked about you. She was in the passage outside your room. I asked her to look in. Yes—you were sleeping. I came in myself on tip-toe just to have one look at you: and then I stooped down and gave you one kiss on your forehead. I saw my little scribbles lying on the table among your medicine glasses. It made me cry to think that such little things could please you."

"I am," ran the next note, "writing this in your hotel. I have driven over, with my two children, to ask for you, as I said I would. Send me a line—a word or two: or else a mere message. I hear you are much better. Oh, if I could only see you! But it would not be allowed me; and under the circumstances, I ought not to ask it. Oh, to be with you again, and to hear your lips say, and to see your eyes look, the forgiveness that you have written to me! When I see you again will you be quite the same? Are you sure you will? I shall not be. I shall be changed: but if you still can care about what happens to me, it is not a change that will displease you."

Weak though he was, he had written her a short answer, as hers of the next day showed. "You tell me," she wrote, "that the doctor says you may move soon. Where will you go? You will think I am very selfish, for the first thought in my mind, when I ask that question, is whether you mean to go, without seeing me or saying a word to me. Don't do that, Bobby. Tell me all your plans. Need you go far away? I hardly know what I write. This air agrees with the children wonderfully. They are getting quite strong again. The loss they have suffered made them curiously quiet at first; but the return of health makes a kind of spring in their minds; and they are beginning to play in the forest, as in the days which you remember. Send me a line—one line even is better than nothing: and tell me that you are getting stronger."

Her next day's note, and the last of the collection, was this. Grenville had just received it, and it was dated the previous night. "Fritz arrived with yours, only an hour ago. Yes. Come here. How can I say 'No'? I could not have ventured to make the suggestion myself, but I was hoping and dreaming that you might be moved to make it. Come to the hotel. I will order the best rooms for you. Would you like to have those that once upon a time were mine? O Bobby, when I think of all that you have gone through, and when I now know that each day you are growing stronger, a duplicate of your health seems to be springing up in me; only the name of the plant in my soil is not health, but happiness. Any day now, I will expect you: but if you can, give me a few hours' notice. I still am nervous and shaken; and even a pleasure that took me by surprise would be a shock to me."

As Grenville was finishing his reading, Fritz entered the room, with towels and hot water, and, opening the window a little, admitted a whisper of leaves, and a breath of sunny air scented with early summer. Grenville felt like a soul entering Paradise, as the freshness reached his nostrils ; for what stole into his mind was not the summer only, but the presence also of an unbelievable something into which his own life was expanding. By midday he was breakfasting in the sitting room lately vacated by the Princess. Then followed his drive. His last excursion in the environs of Lichtenbourg had been the walk he took on the morning when Mrs. Schilizzi had explained to him that she wished he would rid her of his company, and banish himself to the Pasha's castle. That morning he had hardly known where to wander, for every road held some happy memory of her which would then have taunted him in his misery. But now to these roads he was again licensed to return—the happy memories again were becoming part of his own life. His only difficulty now was what road to choose. It was a choice between pleasures, and he lingered over it throughout his meal. When at last he found himself in the carriage, the whole world seemed bright with blossoms. High laburnums bosomed themselves on clouds of leafage. Thorn trees had broken out into masses of white and pink, and their faint but penetrating scent was straying in vagrant courses, and his own memories were blossoming and floating everywhere, like the blossoms and like their scents.

The doctor that evening gave him the unexpected information that, if he chose to do so, if he would take proper precautions, and if he would not travel too far

continuously, he might leave Lichtenbourg next day. "And where," he asked presently, "would you think of going?"

The question caused in Grenville a certain amount of embarrassment, but, without any actual untruth, he managed to get out of it creditably. "The Princess," he said, "will have me whenever I wish to go to her; but, before doing that, I must see Mrs. Schilizzi; so I thought of going first for a day or two to the hotel in the forest."

The doctor declared that nothing could be better than this, as the air there was healthy and bracing to an extraordinary degree. "In fact," he said, "I should advise you to remain there till you are quite strong again."

"And now," said Grenville, "I must ask you an important question, and I trust you to answer candidly. Do you think that my health in any way has suffered, or is likely to suffer, from what I have gone through. I say *in any way*; and you will not misunderstand my meaning."

"Herr Grenville," said the doctor, "had your health been less sound than it was some ten days ago, my answer might have been either a doubtful or a painful one. I cannot say that what you have suffered has left absolutely no effect on you; but the effect, I can tell you confidently, will be no more than this: your throat may be more delicate than it was before—more liable to the attack, say, of some form or other of laryngitis. I must advise you then to take great, though not excessive, care of yourself, and not to neglect precautions at which otherwise you might have safely laughed.

The first thing next morning a messenger was sent to the hunting lodge with the announcement that Grenville

would follow in the course of the afternoon. He did so ; but the carriage being heavy, the journey was slower than he had anticipated, and it was five o'clock before the manager of the hotel was showing him into the sitting room, with which he was so vividly familiar. Lying on the table was a note. It said:

"I will wait in for you. Will you come over and see me? I wonder if you would be able to dine with us ?

He sat down, fatigued a little with the drive, and looked about him for a minute or two. Every vase or jar which would hold flowers were filled with them. Some were wild flowers, but there were others—especially some roses—which he divined must have come from a certain neighboring garden, which he himself, wading among gray dew, had once rifled in the hush of a dim dawn.

He longed to hasten to the hunting lodge. He longed to say that he would dine there. But not only prudence, but an actual sense of weakness, prompted him to write and despatch the following note instead :

"I must not come this evening. I am not very strong yet. You must dine here and must bring the children with you."

An answer was brought back to him on a folded scrap of paper.

"Yes," it said, "we will come."

An hour or so later, as he was still resting in his chair, he heard in the passage a pattering of light feet. There was a light knock at the door, and in came the two children. They came close to him, and gave him their faces to be kissed. He looked for their mother. They had left the door open. He knew she must be coming.

She stood presently in the doorway. Above her soft black dress her face once more to Grenville suggested the petal of a pale geranium. There was in her attitude, as she stood there, a moment's gentle hesitation, and what her eyes suggested to him was the clear shining after rain. Their meeting was made easy by the children's presence. There was no passion perceptible in it—nothing but a gentle and profound quiet.

"Rest," she said, "rest. I am not going to have you standing. Go back to your chair, and I will bring mine beside you."

She asked him how he was. She told him about the health of the children. Then in a low tone she said a word or two about the funeral, and added :

"I know now that I could really have been of no service. The doctor told me that I had nearly been very ill myself. That was the thing which really at last quieted me. It was a witness borne by my body that I really had done my best. I wouldn't believe my soul, though that said the same thing. I fancied it was deceiving me. I couldn't bring myself to believe it. Why should the witness of one's body be so much the more trustworthy?"

In their voices, as they spoke together, there was no note of sorrow, but there was something subdued and hushed—a tribute of reverence to the solemnity of a recent human catastrophe. Then came dinner and the ripple of the children's talk, in which not even the knowledge of death could silence the laugh of childhood. Their mother and Grenville had to talk to them about their food. One child had an absurd struggle with a chicken bone ; the other, by and by, a miniature tragedy with her gravy ; and the conversation, as it flitted from

one trifle to another, though still subdued, gradually became more natural. The two little mouths were busy and getting sugary with sweetmeats, when the nurse arrived to summon them back to bed.

"Let them," said Mrs. Schilizzi, "have a little run on the way, and I will watch them from the balcony. Go—children—go. Mother will come soon: and if you can, catch a fairy to show her. Only mind, it must be a good fairy."

She and Grenville went into the balcony, and watched the two small forms flitting about below them. Presently from a clump of log-myrtle rose, a large pale-winged moth, to which the children immediately gave chase, jumping into the air, and reaching their hands toward it. As she watched this incident, Mrs. Schilizzi laughed. The sound was that unconscious ripple which Grenville knew so well. He turned to her. Her face was bright with a happy smile. It was a smile like the year's first snowdrop.

"Bobby," she said, "you mustn't stay out too long. You look so worn and tired. You had better come in now. Take my arm; you are not too proud to lean on me."

She closed the window, so as to keep the draught from him. She seated herself beside him on the sofa, and looked at him gravely and in silence. At last her form made a slight movement toward him. In an instant, gently and closely, like the tendrils of a noiseless plant, his arms were about her neck, and his lips were whispering in her ear, "Irma, from this day, I will never, I will never leave you."

"Hush, oh, hush!" she exclaimed, softly disengaging



herself. "I will never leave you either, if you will let me remain with you. But for a little while you must let me watch over you like a mother. You are very weak still, and I must treat you like my little child. You are not strong enough yet even to catch a fairy."

"To-morrow," he said, "if it is warmer, let us go again into the forest, and sit at the foot of that same beech tree. Do you remember the blue flowers? Irma, we still have some difficult points to settle."

"Have we?" she murmured, looking down at him, for she had risen to go. "But one thing is settled—you won't unsettle that—that you are never going to leave me."

As they had arranged, in the warmth of summer sunshine, they drove together, with the children, through the well-remembered track in the forest, and found the very beech tree against whose shining stem he once had seen the contrast of her red dress and parasol.

"Tell me," she said softly, as soon as they had composed themselves on the moss, "what the things are we must settle. I know of many; but I want you to speak first." Grenville hesitating, she presently went on. "After all, Bobby, we still have something to settle with our consciences."

"Have we!" he said. "Sometimes I think so, and sometimes not. I at least have offered mine the utmost payment I could make to it."

"And I, too, to mine," she said, "wanted to pay my debt. Do you think that the payment is complete enough?"

"Fate, or the course of events," he answered, "or what I should like to call a Deity, has gently given us back

what we both gave it to take. If to God, or to law, or to our souls, there is still a payment due, let us remember that we have been willing to make payment with our deaths, and since that was not accepted, let us now make it with our lives. Irma," he went on, "it often seems to me that we may go as far astray, or may show as little fortitude, in accusing ourselves, as we often do in excusing ourselves. Let us learn together, Irma, our religion and our philosophy of life, and let us strive for an equal courage in giving ourselves blame and pardon. But all this," he went on, "is not exactly what I was thinking of when I said last night we had some difficult points to settle. I was thinking of our immediate future."

"Yes?" she said anxiously. "Don't say you're going to leave me."

"If I did," he answered, "I should trust you not to believe it. But before we are able, without offending the world, to establish a relation between ourselves which the world can recognize, some time must elapse. If we alone were concerned, such a question need not trouble us. I can never be yours more truly than I am at the present; but, just as one dresses one's self in order to go into the street, so, if our relationship is to be shown to the world eventually, it would be an outrage not to dress it in the world's prescribed formalities. With me, then, the practical question is this: How, till this is done, can we best remain together? Shall I tell you what I have thought of?"

"Tell me."

"Do you remember how often I have talked to you about Italy? If we find it suits the children, shall we travel for some months there—say till the winter? And

then, when at last we can openly share a home together, we might find some villa, either by the sea or in Florence. This could be done without causing the least remark. Whenever it was desirable, we might stay at different hotels. There need be no division between us, except to the outer eye ; and if we are only wise in choosing our times and seasons, we need encounter no eye that would have any interest in observing us. What do you say, Irma? Speak to me. Tell me your opinion."

"Oh," she said at last, "it is all too delightful. Why, Bobby, I wonder if you will understand me. I don't feel that just yet it is right even to think of it."

"Never mind," he answered. "Think of it when you like. I dare say we are none of us in a condition to travel yet ; and meanwhile, while we rest here, I will remember I am your child, and afterward, as long as you wish it, remember I am your brother."

The following evening, as they sat together in the twilight, the charm of the future set free their tongues and fancies, and the scenes glimmered before them which they soon hoped to visit. "Have you forgotten," she said—"I have not forgotten it—the momentary pictures of Italy with which once you stirred and dazzled me. I remember your very words—boats gliding on lakes with sails like the breasts of swans, the marble peaks of the pure Carrara Mountains, rising out of violet mists, and glittering in a sky of primrose color, the notes of the Angelus trembling from craggy villages among the Apennines."

"Yes," said Grenville ; "we will see them all. We will sit together above Como, in an arbor of which I

know, while the banksia roses round us are fretting the purple twilight."

"And I," she said, "will not trouble you with questions about our past. Whatever we ought to think of it we shall learn to think. Our united lives will teach us."

"Yes," said Grenville, "and if our future is good, we shall not condemn too completely the past out of which it sprung. We have broken that outer law, which changes from age to age, and which would never be needed if it were never broken. We have ventured on a sea where there was nothing to guide or save us, but the inner, unwritten law, of which each must be his own interpreter; and whether we have read it truly our lives must show, in what we have won, in what we were ready to lose."

It is never safe to say of a man before his death that he was happy; in certain cases it is safe to say so after it. A year later it might have safely been said of Grenville, who even now, though he did not know it, carried the seeds of death in him. Time, however, was given him for the fulfillment of all his dreams—for the wanderings he had planned with his companion, and the peace of a home shared with her. As for her, what her life owed to him, and what it could not lose even with his loss, may be guessed from the fact that after she was left alone—alone except for her children—her chief solace, and her most constant occupation, was studying the papers and diaries in which his devotion to herself was recorded, and, step by step, comparing her own with them: and gradually forming them into something that resembled a coherent history, she prefixed to her manuscript the following dedication:

TO THE SOLE AND ONLY BEGETTER OF THIS VOLUME: You by whose side I shall lie, in a wicker coffin like yours, with whose bones my bones shall mingle, and whose flesh I shall meet again in the sap of the violets above our grave, I have done my best, while waiting to come back to you in death, to perpetuate in this book neither your life nor mine, but that one single life into which both our lives were fused. Were my power as a writer equal to my love as a woman, that life should live in these pages, as it lived and breathed once in our now lonely bodies. I would make it live—all of it; I would keep back nothing; for perfect love casts out shame. But if anyone should think that I ought to blush for what I have written, I should be proud if, in witness of my love for you, every page of it were as crimson as a rose.



# THE FAMOUS HENTY BOOKS

The Boys' Own Library

12mo, Cloth

G. A. Henty has long held the field as the most popular boys' author. Age after age of heroic deeds has been the subject of his pen, and the knights of old seem very real in his pages. Always wholesome and manly, always heroic and of high ideals, his books are more than popular wherever the English language is spoken.

Each volume is printed on excellent paper from new large-type plates, bound in cloth, assorted colors, with an attractive ink and gold stamp. **Price 50 Cents.**

## A Final Reckoning

A Tale of Bush Life in Australia

## Among the Malay Pirates

By England's Aid

The Freeing of the Netherlands

## By Right of Conquest

A Tale of Cortez in Mexico

## Bravest of the Brave

A Tale of Peterborough in Spain

## By Pike and Dyke

The Rise of the Dutch Republic

## By Sheer Pluck

A Tale of the Ashantee War

## Bonnie Prince Charlie

A Tale of Fontenoy and Culloden

## Captain Bayley's Heir

A Tale of the Gold Fields of California

## Cat of Bubastes

A Story of Ancient Egypt

## Colonel Thorndyke's Secret

Cornet of Horse

A Tale of Marlborough's Wars

## Facing Death

A Tale of the Coal Mines

## Friends, though Divided

A Tale of the Civil War in England

## For Name and Fame

A Tale of Afghan Warfare

## For the Temple

A Tale of the Fall of Jerusalem

## In Freedom's Cause

A Story of Wallace and Bruce

## In the Reign of Terror

The Adventures of a Westminster Boy

## In Times of Peril

A Tale of India

## Jack Archer

A Tale of the Crimea

## Lion of St. Mark

A Tale of Venice in the XIV. Century

## Lion of the North

A Tale of Gustavus Adolphus

## Maori and Settler

A Tale of the New Zealand War

## Orange and Green

A Tale of the Boyne and Limerick

## One of the 28th

A Tale of Waterloo

## Out on the Pampas

A Tale of South America

## Rujub the Juggler

## St. George for England

A Tale of Crécy and Poitiers

## Sturdy and Strong

A Tale of the Revolution

## True to the Old Flag

A Tale of the Revolution

## The Golden Cañon

## The Lost Heir

## The Young Colonists

A Tale of the Zulu and Boer War

## The Young Midshipman

## The Dragon and the Raven

A Tale of King Alfred

## The Boy Knight

A Tale of the Crusades

## Through the Fray

A Story of the Luddite Riots

## Under Drake's Flag

A Tale of the Spanish Main

## With Wolfe in Canada

The Tale of Winning a Continent

## With Clive in India

The Beginning of an Empire

## With Lee in Virginia

A Story of the American Civil War

## Young Carthaginian

A Story of the Times of Hannibal

## Young Buglers

A Tale of the Peninsular War

## Young Franc-Tireurs

A Tale of the Franco-Prussian War

(5)

THE MERSHON COMPANY

225 Fifth Ave., New York

Railway, N. Y.

# FLAG OF FREEDOM SERIES

By CAPTAIN RALPH BONEHILL

Volumes Illustrated, Bound in Cloth, with a very Attractive Cover,  
Price \$1.25 per Volume, or Set of Five in Box for \$6.00

## **BOYS OF THE FORT ; or, A Young Captain's Pluck**

Captain Bonehill is at his best when relating a tale of military adventure, and this story of stirring doings at one of our well-known forts in the Wild West is of more than ordinary interest. The young captain had a difficult task to accomplish, but he had been drilled to do his duty, and he did it thoroughly. Gives a good insight into army life of to-day.

## **THE YOUNG BANDMASTER ; or, Concert Stage and Battlefield**

In this tale Captain Bonehill touches upon a new field. The hero is a youth with a passion for music, who, compelled to make his own way in the world, becomes a cornetist in an orchestra, and works his way up, first, to the position of a soloist, and then to that of leader of a brass band. He is carried off to sea and falls in with a secret-service cutter bound for Cuba, and while in that island joins a military band which accompanies our soldiers in the never-to-be-forgotten attack on Santiago. A mystery connected with the hero's inheritance adds to the interest of the tale.

## **OFF FOR HAWAII ; or, The Mystery of a Great Volcano**

Here we have fact and romance cleverly interwoven. Several boys start on a tour of the Hawaiian Islands. They have heard that there is a treasure located in the vicinity of Kilauea, the largest active volcano in the world, and go in search of it. Their numerous adventures will be followed with much interest.

## **A SAILOR BOY WITH DEWEY ; or, Afloat in the Philippines**

The story of Dewey's victory in Manila Bay will never grow old, but here we have it told in a new form—not as those in command witnessed the contest, but as it appeared to a real, live American youth who was in the navy at the time. Many adventures in Manila and in the interior follow, giving true-to-life scenes from this remote portion of the globe. A book that should be in every boy's library.

## **WHEN SANTIAGO FELL ; or, The War Adventures of Two Chums**

Captain Bonehill has never penned a better tale than this stirring story of adventures in Cuba. Two boys, an American and his Cuban chum, leave New York to join their parents in the interior of Cuba. The war between Spain and the Cubans is on, and the boys are detained at Santiago de Cuba, but escape by crossing the bay at night. Many adventures between the lines follow, and a good pen-picture of General Garcia is given. The American lad, with others, is captured and cast into a dungeon in Santiago ; and then follows the never-to-be-forgotten campaign in Cuba under General Shafter. How the hero finally escapes makes reading no wide-awake boy will want to miss.

### **Press Opinions of Captain Bonehill's Books for Boys**

" Captain Bonehill's stories will always be popular with our boys, for the reason that they are thoroughly up-to-date and true to life. As a writer of outdoor tales he has no rival."—*Bright Days*.

" The story is by Captain Ralph Bonehill, and that is all that need be said about it, for all of our readers know that the captain is one of America's best story-tellers, so far as stories for young people go."—*Young People of America*.

" We understand that Captain Bonehill will soon be turning from sporting stories to tales of the war. This field is one in which he should feel thoroughly at home. We are certain that the boys will look eagerly for the Bonehill war tales."—*Weekly Messenger*.

© **THE MERSHON COMPANY**

166 Fifth Ave., New York

Rahway, N. J.



## MRS. L. T. MEADE'S FAMOUS BOOKS FOR GIRLS

12mo, Cloth

Price \$1.25

There are few more favorite authors with American girls than Mrs. L. T. MEADE, whose copyright works can only be had from us. Essentially a writer for the home, with the loftiest aims and purest sentiments, Mrs. Meade's books possess the merit of utility as well as

the means of amusement. They are girls' books—written for girls, and fitted for every home.

Here will be found no maudlin nonsense as to the affections. There are no counts in disguise nor castles in Spain. It is pure and wholesome literature of a high order with a lofty ideal.

The volumes are all copyright, excellently printed with clear, open type, uniformly bound in best cloth, with ink and gold stamp.

### THE FOLLOWING ARE THE TITLES

**The Children of Wilton Chase**

**Beahful Fifteen**

**Betty: A Schoolgirl**

**Four on an Island**

**Girls New and Old**

**Out of the Fashion**

**The Palace Beautiful**

**Polly, a New-Fashioned Girl**

**Red Rose and Tiger Lily**

**Temptation of Olive Latimer**

**A Ring of Rubies**

**A Sweet Girl Graduate**

**A World of Girls**

**Good Luck**

**A Girl in Ten Thousand**

**A Young Mutineer**

**Wild Kitty**

**The Children's Pilgrimage**

**The Girls of St. Wode's**

**Light o' the Morning**

**Bad Little Hannah**

**Rebellion of Lill Carrington**

**A Little Mother to the Others**

**Merry Girls of England**

**THE MERSHON COMPANY**

156 Fifth Ave., New York

Rahway, N. J.





# EDWARD S. ELLIS'

## POPULAR BOYS' BOOKS

12mo, Cloth

Price, \$1.25



Purely American in scene, plot, motives, and characters, the copyright works of EDWARD S. ELLIS are deservedly popular with the youth of America. In a community where every native-born boy can aspire to the highest offices, such a book as Ellis' "From

the Throttle to the President's Chair," detailing the progress of the sturdy son of the people from locomotive engineer to the presidency of a great railroad, must always be popular. The youth of the land which boasts of a Vanderbilt will ever desire such books, and naturally will desire stories of their native land before wandering over foreign climes.

The volumes of this series are all copyright, printed from large new type, on good paper, and are handsomely bound in cloth, stamped with appropriate designs.

THE FOLLOWING COMPRISE THE TITLES

**Down the Mississippi**

**From the Throttle to the President's Chair**

**Up the Tapajos**

**Tad; or, "Getting Even" with Him**

**Lost in Samoa**

**Red Plume** **Lost in the Wilds**

**A Waif of the Mountains**

**Land of Wonders**

**Through Jungle and Wilderness**

**Life of Kit Carson**

**THE MERSHON COMPANY**

156 Fifth Ave., New York

Rahway, N. J.

24  
92









